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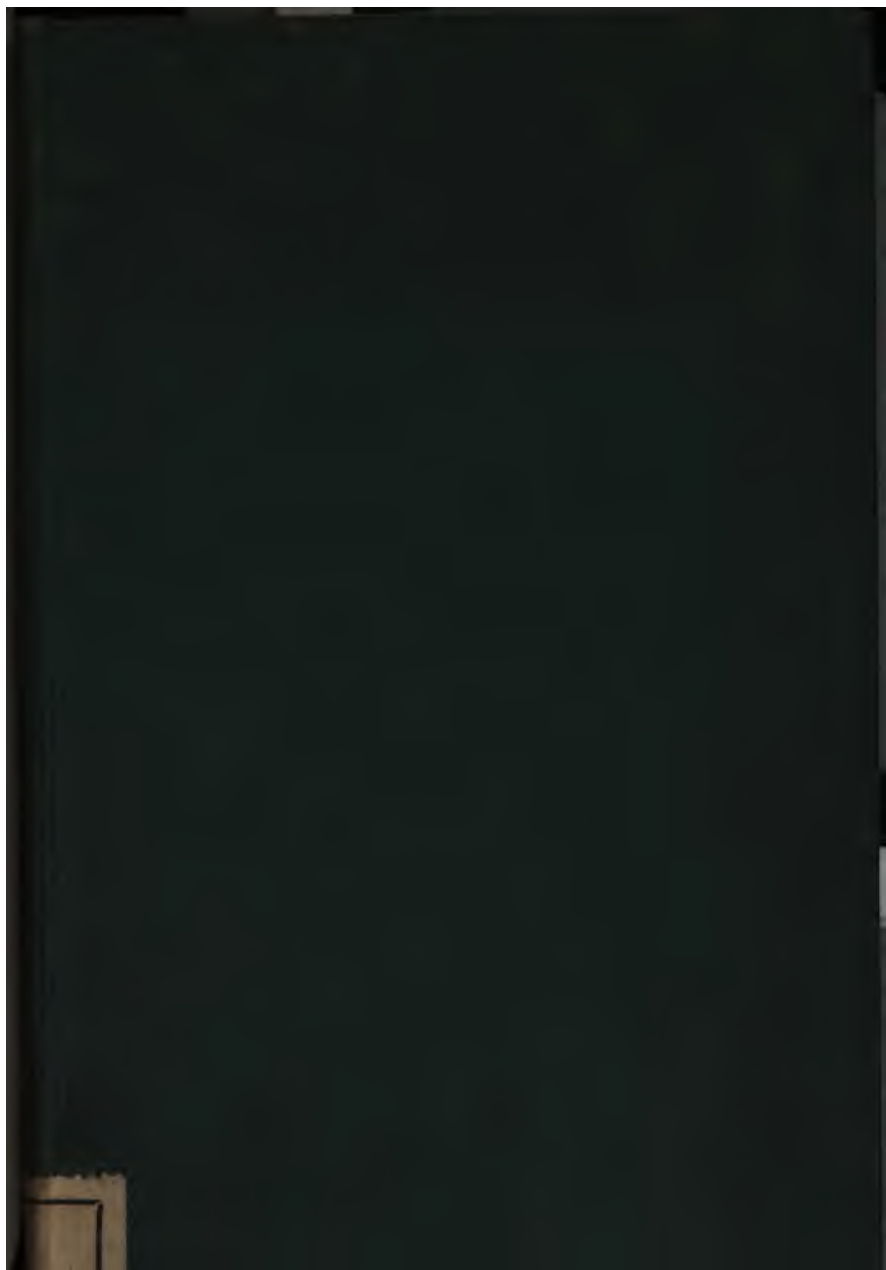
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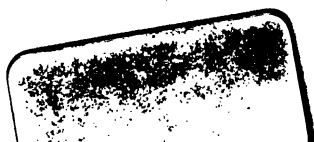
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THE
FAITHFUL FRIEND;
OR,
TWO CONVERSATIONS
ON
WORLDLY INTERCOURSE AND FAMILY DUTIES.
WITH A
SHORT MEMOIR OF THE WRITER,
BY A BROTHER.

"A true witness delivereth souls."—Prov. xiv. 25.

"A friend loveth at all times."—Prov. xvii. 17.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET, BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCXXXIV.

1419 . f . 280

nothing more than ideal remedies and unsubstantial blessings.

Christianity finds man, in his natural state, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him,* with no knowledge of the way of real happiness and peace,† with *no* desires, or with very vague, undefined, and misdirected desires, beyond the present world. It finds indeed the descendants of fallen Adam born into the world with a diversity of natural gifts and dispositions—the lively and the morose, the gentle and the violent, the clever and the dull. But it finds none with those dispositions which are the pre-requisites for heaven, none mourning for sin,‡ hungering and thirsting after righteousness, crucified to the world,§ and panting for God, the living God.||

Wherever, then, this holy and blessed religion is received, it enlightens the understanding,¶ as to spiritual and heavenly things; it gives a new bias to the desires and affec-

* Ephes. iv. 18.

† Rom. iii. 17.

‡ Matt. v. 3, 4. 6.

§ Gal. vi. 14.

|| Psalm xlii. 2.

¶ Ephes. i. 18.

tions,* it supplies fresh motives of action, it unfolds new objects of pursuit. It points, indeed, to dangers before unfeared and unsuspected, but at the same time it directs to sources of strength and safety, before untried and undesired. It causes springs to break forth in the wilderness, and fountains in the desert.† It reveals, in short, salvation to the lost, rest to the weary and heavy laden, comfort to the mourner, Heaven to the outcast. It brings the rebel back to loyalty, it restores the prodigal to his reconciled Father,‡ it leads the wanderer to a safe and happy fold, it raises the beggar from the dunghill, and sets him among princes.§

The writer of the following dialogues found the spirit, and power, and blessedness of the Gospel of Christ to be such as I have endeavoured to describe them. She was one of those of whom not few instances are to be found in civilized communities, who, as to natural character, are lovely and worthily

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Isa. xxxv. 6.

‡ Luke xv. 11, &c.

§ Psalm cxiii. 7, 8.

beloved. The deeply-attached brother, who would now endeavour briefly to call her ways to remembrance, can readily revert to those endearing qualities of his departed sister, which drew to her, he scruples not to say, not only the lively and constant affection of her own family, but the high opinion and growing regards of all who knew her.

The early years of the subject of this memoir were marked by those features of character and habits of conduct, which are usually deemed to constitute all that is amiable and desirable in the private and unobtrusive walks of life. One of a large family, by a peculiar vivacity and cheerfulness of disposition, a tenderness and susceptibility of feeling, a quickness, if not a brilliancy of talent, together with a sober and well exercised judgment, she attracted to herself, as to a centre, the love, the admiration, the high estimation, of those who moved around her.

Being the daughter of a country gentleman, she had those advantages of education,

which are usually enjoyed under such circumstances. And that her vigorous mind entered into the subjects of her study, and enabled her to comprehend and profit by them, might easily be shewn, from the interesting and able manuscripts she has left on various topics.

I know not that she could have been charged with any outward omissions of those relative duties which in her early years she had to discharge. As a daughter she was ever dutiful, and most fondly and tenderly attached to her parents. As a sister, and a friend, she was most kind, and gentle, and affectionate ; cheerful and animated herself, and apparently anxious to communicate her feelings to others.

As to her external attention also to religious duties, her whole conduct was regular and decorous, and, so far as the declaration would apply to her, might perhaps have said, as the Apostle Paul declared of himself before his conversion, that she was, " touching the righteousness which is in the

law, blameless.”* And deeply indeed could she enter into the feelings, and adopt the confession, of that holy Apostle, when she, by the grace of God, was led to perceive the value, and embrace the truths, of the Gospel of Christ. “What things were given to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”†

Before the period to which I have just alluded, she partook for a few years of what are termed the gaieties and amusements of life, and her natural vivacity could not fail to make the ball-room a place of enjoyment to her. The reader will collect her subsequent views of such gaieties and amusement from the dialogues that follow.

But some of my readers will perhaps be ready to say, ‘You have been describing an almost perfect character. In what respects could any alteration be made, or any improvement be desired, in a person so

* Phil. iii. 6.

† Phil. iii. 8.

amiable and exemplary? If she, of whom you write, failed not in the outward performance of religious duties, if as a daughter, as a sister, as a friend, she were dutiful, affectionate, kind, and gentle, what lacked she yet? Thankful am I to have it in my power to supply answers to such enquiries, from writings under her own pen. She was taught to feel, and ready to acknowledge, that he is not a Christian who is only such outwardly, and that true and saving religion is not that which is merely outward in the flesh; but that the real Christian is he, who is one inwardly, whose affections and conduct are influenced by the faith, fear, and love of Him, by whose name he is called—who, instead of being satisfied with any fancied goodness of his heart, and the morality of his life, knows and confesses that in himself dwelleth no good thing—who, instead of living to the world and seeking his resting-place there, can testify, “To me to live is Christ, and to die gain;”^{*}—and who, instead of

^{*} Phil. i. 21.

pursuing the praise and the honour that come of men, desires to approve himself to God, and counts the light of *his* countenance better than life.

That the mind of my beloved sister was wrought upon by the force of divine truth, when she was in her eighteenth year, I collect from a very interesting letter addressed to myself at that period. A conflict was then going on within her. The trammels of the world, too high a regard for its ways and opinions, appear in some measure to have tied and bound her, and the desire was beginning to animate her, that she might be delivered from this thralldom. The following were the feelings of her heart at that time: "Oh that that world, which is ready to deem the true followers of Christ weak-headed enthusiasts, would accuse me! Oh that it would bear bitterly upon me! for while it smiles upon me, it destroys me. As Judas betrayed his blessed Master with a kiss, so doth it betray me. But is not this ingratitude? is not this distrust? Once I

knew not that I needed a Saviour—*once* I thought myself righteous, and gloried in my filthy rags—*once*, with me, *morality* was *religion*—*once* the thunders of the law overcame the still small voice of the Gospel.

‘ Now I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief and thrall,
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all ? ’

The following extracts from a journal, written about three years after the date of the above letter, are striking testimonies of the nature and progress of her views of the genuine and invigorating religion of the Gospel, as distinguished from that superficial, and formal, and cheerless, and un-influential profession of Christianity, which lulls and satisfies, and, (it cannot but be feared,) deceives and destroys too many of the members of the visible Church of Christ:

“ The world shrinks from *truisms*, and so once did I. The corruption of our nature,—

that subject of deepest import!—that ground-work of a vital change,—a saving principle,—was loathed as a bitter medicine. *Frailties, infirmities*, and all such qualifying terms, may be found in the natural man's dictionary; but the humiliating language of Scripture is only for hypocrites and enthusiasts! How shall I speak, most gracious Lord, of that mercy, which has inspired me with the earnest desire to know the extent of my disease? Ah, where would the affrighted soul find shelter, where would it fly from despair, were not the remedy held forth, when it first views its loathsomeness? When consciousness forcibly presses upon us, 'how is the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed?' when that darkness is *felt*, which rests upon the soul of apostate man—when every fresh beam of self-knowledge bids us exclaim, like the leper, 'unclean, unclean,'—then, but for a ray from the Sun of Righteousness, but for some refreshing sprinkling from the Fountain opened for sin and for

uncleanness, despair would be our portion. How sweetly are justice and mercy combined ! When feeling that conflict within, that we cannot do the things that we would ; when deploring that want of simplicity in intention, that languor, that backwardness, in every labour which *love* should animate ; when *most* feeling that weakness in spiritual things, which seems to blight the fondest hopes ; the voice of *the Husband, the Shepherd, the Physician*, rouses the drooping heart, and says, ‘ Fear not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God ;’* ‘ my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness.’†

‘ Then will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found ;
Will point to his redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God.’ ”

That it was no *slight* or *passing* conviction that was wrought in my beloved sister, in reference to her state as a sinner before an

* Isaiah xli. 10.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

infinitely holy and heart-searching God, might easily be shown, not only from the general tenor of her life and conversation, but from the universal strain of her writings. Truly may it be said, that her spirit testified with the Spirit of God, that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”*

The “stout-hearted”† and unawakened men of this world may stamp with terms of contempt and reprobation those who are ready to cast themselves, as undone and “miserable sinners,” simply and solely upon the full and free mercy of God in Christ Jesus. But, independently of the scriptural assurance that the leading work of the Holy Spirit is to *convince of sin*,‡ we have the concurrent testimony of even the most holy of God’s servants in all ages, that, in themselves, and of themselves, they are nothing, and can do nothing.

Such was the genuine and abiding ex-

* Jer. xvii. 9.

† Isa. xlvi. 12.

‡ John xvi. 8.

perience of her now under our notice. "How awfully dangerous," she writes, "are faint conceptions of our natural depravity! Fatally insensible to our lost estate, we neglect to flee from the wrath to come; secure and thoughtless, we are on the brink of everlasting death and destruction, and find not, (but by the grace and teaching of God,) our need of a spiritual Physician. Too loudly does my own heart proclaim to me that there is no righteousness in me; that nature would suggest the saddest motives for action; that nature would worship all but God himself. Gracious Lord, thou knowest (and, blessed be thy name, *I* now know) that I was neither *willing* nor *able* to turn unto thee; that I was not only *frail* and *infirm*, but *lost* and *helpless*; that my religion was but a self-satisfying cloak, which self-love was ever ready to patch up. Having nothing, then, of which I may boast, I can only cry for mercy, for that mercy which came to seek and save the lost."

Strangers indeed are they to the religion of the Gospel of Christ, who charge it with infusing melancholy into the heart, and overspreading the brow with gloom and sadness. True it is, that those who are seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, not unfrequently have their hearts and their countenances made sad, while they view the vain and thoughtless, if not the wicked and profligate career of those among whom they live. True it is, that while they have a cup of joy to drink, which the world knoweth not of, and a peace which passeth understanding, they have also their trials and afflictions, from within and from without, with which others, who seek their portion in this life, are unacquainted. Nevertheless, the followers of the meek, and suffering, yet now risen, Saviour, can say, even in their darkest seasons, "Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increased."*

* Ps. iv. 7.

“ Boast not, ye sons of earth,
Nor look with scornful eyes ;
Above your highest mirth,
Our saddest hours we prize ;
For though our cup seems fill'd with gall,
There's something secret sweetens all.”

And while from their religion they derive their purest happiness,—their only sure and satisfying support and consolation,—they feel that, instead of its being the parent of gloom and dreariness, they should, indeed, without it, be heirs of sorrow, and children of despair. Alluding to some trying and afflicting circumstances, through which she had been called to pass, and on account of which, it seems that it had, in some measure, been charged upon *her religion*, that it made her sorrowful, the subject of these pages thus writes:—“ Late events have been most *painfully* and *distressingly* interesting. They have weighed down spirits, whose elasticity would have spurned *common* burthens ; they have clouded a heart which used to laugh for joy. But let not this sor-

row be reckoned as the effect of *religion itself*. She comes in, all peaceful, all holy, and whispers every consolation; she tells me that a watchful Father saw the need of this cloud, and in mercy spread it. She tells me that it is fraught with blessings. She teaches me to pray, that I may be 'joyful in hope, patient in tribulation.'* She teaches me that 'tis the road to the kingdom of glory; and, yet more, she teaches me that my *deservings* could have claimed nothing but a fire unquenchable—an ever-gnawing worm—that, *had* the world uniformly smiled upon me, my faithless heart would have fallen in love with it; and 'let her alone,'† might have been the destructive, the awful sentence."

For some years before she was called to her rest above, the health of my dear sister was weakened and impaired by sickness; and on some occasions during this period, the thought seemed peculiarly impressed

* Rom. xii. 12.

† Hosea iv. 17.

upon her mind, that the time of her departure was at hand. And *then* was manifested the stability of the foundation on which her hopes were built; *then* were realized the sufficiency of the grace and the faithfulness of the promises of her God and Saviour. Thus she writes; "It has pleased an all-gracious God to speak loudly to me, 'Here you have no continuing city.'*" About three weeks ago I was taken ill with what had the name of a *violent cold*, but which has kept me to my room ever since. Yesterday I was out for the first time. Many of my loved relations are dispersed, and away from home; but I would turn from temporals to prayer and praise. That Thou, O Father of mercies and God of consolation, wouldest sanctify to me this and all thy dispensations, I would earnestly implore. The hope that Thou of thy great goodness art leading me, a vile and sinful worm, by thy own right way to the city of habitation, has

* Heb. xiii. 14.

cheered my heart and revived my drooping spirit. O grant that the deprivation of creature comforts may only tend to make Jesus more precious unto me, that I may *know* and *feel* Him to be the 'Brother born for adversity.'* How gently hast Thou laid thy chastening hand upon me! A bruised reed Thou hast sustained, the dimly burning flax Thou hast cherished. Truly at this moment I feel as if the earthly house of this tabernacle would soon be dissolved, as if a voice were saying unto me, 'Arise thou, and depart.' For this *I* have not a wish. It has pleased God to separate me much lately from ties that bound me closely here; and though my love to them is in no degree abated, but burns as fervently as ever, yet He has thereby impressed upon me, that as *fellow pilgrims*, our day of close fellowship is past. *Their* sorrow, should I be called hence, is all I seem to feel. To be sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, carries

* Prov. xvii. 17.

with it no fearfulness for me; I mean by this, I feel quite familiar with death—but my drooping spirit scarcely dares look up. Blessed Lord, spread thy mantle of pardoning love over me. Washed in thy blood, clad in thy righteousness, then would every fear vanish, and I should only exclaim, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.’”*

And, a few months afterwards, she writes, “My tender, watchful Lord, has again spoken loudly to me, that, in the morning, though green and growing up, in the evening I may be cut down, dried up, and withered. This year I have seen much sickness and languor, and *more* of the Lord’s tender mercies than ever I did before. May I lean on his almighty arm *every step* of my pilgrimage, and *feel* that I am but dust and ashes.”

Near, however, as her departure often appeared to herself, and often as those who loved her had to view, with affectionate

* Rev. xxii. 20.

trembling and anxiety, her delicate frame and diminishing strength, the Lord yet allowed this, his dear servant, to continue on earth for a season. He had more work for her yet to do. He had yet to give her, not only as to herself, but as to others, more manifest assurances, that He hears and answers prayers—that He is to those who seek Him, and hope in his mercy, a refuge and a strong hold—a very present and sufficient help in trouble. She was to view a beloved parent, after a protracted and most painful illness, glorifying God in the fires* of affliction—she was to hear him, again and again, bless the hand that had chastened and brought him low, that it might lift him up for ever—and she was to hear of this dear and fondly affectionate parent, the object alike, both to her and to others, of many solitudes, and of fervent supplications, that he rejoiced in God his Saviour, and that his parting breath was praise.

Nay, yet further, He who ordereth all

* Isa. xxiv. 15.

things in heaven and in earth, and without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, had to call her into new scenes, to place her under the nearest and tenderest of all earthly ties, under the exercise of new duties and affections. Between two and three years before her blessed spirit passed the confines of this world, she was united to one for whom she had long felt a most lively interest, and who, having discerned the solidity of her character, and the beauty and consistency of her general deportment, had for many years entertained towards her a deep and undeviating attachment.

His duties, as an officer in the army, were at this time to be exercised in Guiana, and as the climate of this particular station was considered to be more favourable to the state of her health than that of some of the islands, the hope was held forth, and fondly cherished, that my dear sister might, under God's blessing, receive real and lasting benefit to her health, from the circumstances and situation

into which, by his providence, she appeared now to be led.

It is needless to dwell upon the conflicting feelings, which exercised our family circle, when one, who had been so much its joy and its ornament, went from the midst of us, to be severed from us by the vast and mighty deep, and to dwell in a land of strangers. It was our happiness, indeed, to commit her to the care of a most tender, and affectionate, and Christian husband. But I believe it might have been said truly, of those who went, and of those who remained, that our best and only substantial comfort was derived from commending one another to God, and to the word of his grace.

I might, perhaps, interest my reader's feelings, and harrow up my own, by referring to some short passages in my sister's journal, when now she was in the vessel which was to bear her from England's shores, and when, as those shores were more and more faintly

discerned by her, she entered into the meaning of those deeply-touching words,

“ My native land, good night.”

Suffice it, however, to say, that under a gracious and watchful Providence, the voyage was safely and prosperously performed.

And now, for a little season, we are to view the subject of this Memoir in a new sphere of action. She had been alive, indeed, to works of Christian kindness, and to the occupation of Christian instruction among her poor neighbours in England, as far as her health permitted her, and, perhaps, beyond the measure of her strength. But, in her new station, how interesting were the objects brought under her notice! She was surrounded by a population of slaves, dark indeed as to the complexion of their skin, but (what was of infinitely greater moment,) “ having their understanding darkened through the ignorance that was in them.”*

* Eph. iv. 18.

She delighted to gather the negro children around her, and, as by little and little she could lead them to comprehend her sayings, she would tell them of Him, who is no respecter of persons, but gave himself a willing sacrifice for sinners, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free. Her labours of love, in this new and important field, there is much reason to believe, were far from being in vain.

With some variations and intermissions, her health considerably improved, for above a year and a half after her arrival in South America, and, during this period, the accounts we were continually receiving from her, were of a very cheering and interesting nature. It was through this short and fleeting period, that she furnished us with tidings of the blessings with which her cup was filled; she told us of all the watchful affection of her devoted partner—she led us, as it were, into all her domestic arrangements, and convinced us, that, as a wife and the mistress of a household, she was a holy, and happy, and

thankful receiver of the many mercies of her God, and that her aim and desire was to adorn his doctrine in all things.

Though we were too well aware that her constitution was considerably shaken by the lengthened illness, and the consequent discipline, through which she passed, before her departure from England, yet we almost allowed ourselves to indulge the hope, (since the climate in which she was placed appeared to be congenial to her, and to increase her strength,) that it might be the good pleasure of our Heavenly Father to restore her to us, after a time, greatly and permanently recruited. But He had far better things in store for her than any earthly home, or mortal friends, could give.

As the year 1832 was drawing to its close, no doubt appears to have remained in my dear sister's mind, that the day was quickly approaching, when she would be numbered "no more with the inhabitants of the world."*

* Isaiah xxxviii. 11.

Symptoms of the illness, which had before brought her low, and from which she had so greatly rallied, returned with renewed violence. And now a gradual, but decisive, failure of strength took place. As to the outer man, she was (to use her own expression) quite "*worn out*," and every thing tended to convince her, that her "earthly house of this tabernacle would soon be dissolved."*

And what had she now to encounter? What, under these circumstances, was her sharpest trial? Blessed be God, as to her spiritual and eternal interests, she was kept "in perfect peace."† She was not one of the number of *them*, who, utterly unconcerned and unawakened as to "the world to come," are described as having "no bands in their death."‡ Nor was she among those who, "going about to establish their own righteousness,"§ compass themselves about with sparks, and walk in the light of their

* 2 Cor. v. 1.

† Is. xxvi. 3.

‡ Ps. lxxiii. 4.

§ Rom. x. iii.

fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled, to whom the Lord solemnly declares, "This shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."* She had not, at this momentous season, when every thing earthly was soon to vanish from her sight, to seek the Lord in trembling and doubtful anxiety. Having fled for refuge to the hope set before her in the Gospel, truly she had a strong consolation, and "an anchor for her soul, both sure and steadfast."† She knew in whom she had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which she had committed unto him against the great day.‡

But we must view her, as to *outward* circumstances, in order that we may form some estimate of the power and value of that religion, which sustained her in such a time as this. While she was experiencing, from

* Is. l. 11.

† Heb. vi. 18, 19.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 12.

time to time, very great bodily sufferings, with her frame emaciated, and her “strength dried up like a potsherd,” she had to consider her fond and greatly beloved husband, about to be left by her, far from his home and kindred—and to be left, (for a season at least,) where all around him would continually and most vividly remind him of happy and peaceful by-gone hours of affectionate communion—where the ready salutation, and smiling welcome, would no more cheer his return from duty—where the vacant sofa, or solitary garden, would tell him of the bond that was severed, and afresh proclaim his bereavement.

She had, too, to cast her thoughts across the vast expanse of ocean, by which she was separated from her many relations and friends, most deeply seated in her affections, and whose hearts, she knew, were full of the warmest love and tender anxiety for her.—And, as to all these, she felt, that she could never more behold them again in the flesh.

The haunts of her childhood, the home of her youth, she could visit no more.

This, indeed, was her trial. Here, truly, while she could, and did testify, that the spirit was willing, she experienced, that the flesh was weak. While religion had elevated and sanctified her affections, it had by no means deadened them. "THIS," she said, with much emphasis, to her husband, "THIS, my beloved, is the struggle. I dare not think of *you*, or *them*," alluding to her own family, from whom she had then received some letters. "I must look forward and upward—THERE must be *my* rest—and I *have* a blessed hope of salvation through Jesus Christ."

On the 30th of December, she committed to paper her last wishes with regard to some few tokens of affection to those dear to her, under the conviction, as she stated, that her days were rapidly drawing to a close. She added, "I thank my God, my mind has been kept in perfect peace, because He has graciously enabled me to flee to

that All-sufficient Refuge for every storm, my Rock of ages, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend; and to see, that his blood is all-sufficient to cleanse me, and that all the vileness and sinfulness I have carried about with me will be cast into the depths of the sea. Do not, then, grieve for me. I am, indeed, longing to depart and be with Christ, and hail the daily progress of disease with thankfulness. . . . Thanks be to God for this dispensation."

A few days after writing the above, namely, on the 4th of January, 1833, she closed the last letter she ever wrote to her beloved surviving parent, in the following striking manner: "My dearest mother,—I have only had cause for thankfulness, though the late dispensation has been a very trying one—sanctified, I humbly hope, if I may judge from my blessed, blessed, state of peace, and rejoicing in my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How all-sufficient have I found his righteousness to clothe a polluted soul! How all-sufficient

that blood which cleanseth from *all* sin! We *do* need such a Refuge, when Jordan's stormy waters are heard, and feel as safe as on a high rock, when the billows are washing and roaring far beneath. The next letter will, probably, give more decided accounts. In the mean time, may we all be enabled to cast our every burthen upon our God, and be *quite* sure, that He will do 'all things well.' May He bless you all with his very best blessings for time and for eternity!

"Your most grateful child,"

A letter from her anxious and sorrowing husband, written about this time, forcibly describes, also, the peaceful state of mind, experienced by her, from whom he was shortly to be separated. "I feel," he writes, "my need of that support, which the arm of flesh cannot give: I see my precious gourd wasting before me, and I feel that vain is the help of man. But I have felt the consolation that cometh from

above, and I am doubly blessed in seeing the sweet and tranquil state of my beloved wife. The medical men, and all who see her, speak of it with astonishment."

On the 19th of January, she, for the last time, was visited by a Minister of the Gospel. Her mind was most calm. She entered into the prayers and praises which he offered up with her—and this servant of Christ was led to say to her husband, on leaving her, "I never saw so blessed a spirit—such perfect resignation—such dependence on her Saviour."

There had been seasons, in which she looked to death itself, the crisis when the immortal part was to quit its mortal tenement, with feelings of awe, not unmixed with terror. She had not been without fear (to use her own expression) that the waters of Jordan would break over her;—and, on the day before her departure, she begged her husband to read to her, from the little volume of "Sacred Poetry," the following touching lines, which I sub-

join, as indicative, at once, both of the shrinking of nature, above described, and of the upholding principles of faith and hope, which still animated her.

1. “ *Dark River of Death*, that art flowing
Between the *Bright City* and me,
Thou boundest the path I am going—
O, how shall I pass over thee?
2. “ When the cold stormy waters rise o’er me,
And earth disappears from my sight,—
When a cloud rises thickly before me,
And veils all my spirits in night:—
3. “ When the hands I love dearly are wringing,
The eyes all for me wet with tears,
The hearts that surround me still clinging,
And I all misgivings and fears :
4. “ Ere the warmth of that love be departed
That binds us so closely below,
Could I bear to see them broken-hearted,
Nor feel all the sting of their woe!
5. “ O death ! thou last portion of sorrow !
The prospect of heaven is bright,
And fair is the dawn of its morrow,—
But stormy and dreadful thy night !

6. " O Thou, who hast broken the power
Of this the last victor of men,
Be with me in that solemn hour,
O grant me deliverance then !
7. " The glory from Calvary streaming
May shine o'er the cold sable wave ;
And the faith that is oftentimes beaming
May burst through the gloom of the grave.
8. " And peace may shine cloudless above me,
When I think what my Saviour has said,
The Father Himself deigns to love me,
And Jesus has died in my stead !
9. " With the prospect of meeting for ever,
With the bright gates of heaven in view,
From the dearest on earth I could sever,
And smile a delightful, Adieu !"

Shortly after this, and when her journey in the wilderness was now drawing very near to its close, every such fear, as I have above alluded to, seems to have been most graciously hushed—and, waking up from a short sleep, and adverting to the 23d Psalm (a portion of God's word that

was very sweet and precious to her), she said. "He is my Shepherd, and I do not fear."

Happy, thrice happy, are they who, when the summons comes home to them, "arise and depart;" and, when the voice of the Bridegroom calls them to partake of the marriage feast, can at once confess their readiness, can at once testify, that they are "willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord;"* who, knowing the firmness of the foundation, the sufficiency of the grace, and the faithfulness of the promises, on which their hearts rely—who having their affections weaned from the things of earth, and raised to heavenly treasures, can, at God's bidding, drop at once their tenement of clay, and mount, as it were, with waiting outspread wings, to their mansion in the skies.

Such, I cannot doubt, was the blessed readiness of her now under our considera-

* 2 Cor. v. 8.

tion, when, a few hours before her removal, to her fond and watchful husband inquiring, "if she had any thing more to say or to do," she replied, "*No, I have nothing to do but to die ;*" and when, soon afterwards, she exclaimed, "*What a change it will be ! How glorious !*"

After experiencing some calm and sweet sleep, and saying of herself, more than once, that she was "*very, very comfortable,*" she called her nurse to raise her from the bed. In a moment her husband heard the cry, "*Master, Master, help me.*" His faithful arms received his fainting wife. She cast herself on his shoulder, and, gently sighing, and "beaming on him (to use his own words) such a smile, that he could not believe she was gone," fled, as to her blessed spirit, from earth to heaven.

Early in the morning of the 21st of January, 1833, did her "*glorious change*" take place—and, since in hot climates it is necessary that mourning friends should consent to the speedy burial of their dead out of their

sight, her remains were committed to the earth on the following day.

Natural feelings may, and do indeed, experience a wound, when the mortal part of those we love lies buried in a distant land—when the waves of a trackless ocean roll between their last narrow home and the village church-yard, or the venerated vault, in which we might have hoped that, when they were summoned to their God, their dust would have mingled with that of their fathers. But the eye of faith will rest on no such saddening contemplation. She will penetrate every gathering cloud—and, bounding as it were over every barrier of space and time, will fly, with the lightning's speed, to the bright morning of the Resurrection, when “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,”* the sea shall give up the dead which were in it, and death and the grave shall give up the dead which were in them;† and that great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and

* 1 Cor. xv. 52.

† Rev. xx. 13.

kindred, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne and before the Lamb.*

And now, for a little season, adieu, thou happy and beloved sister! Very lovely and pleasant wast thou to me in thy life—and sweet and refreshing to me is thy memory! The hope that, ere long, we shall be re-united in a world of spotless holiness—that we shall together see, and together praise, in unwearied songs, our common Saviour, our most gracious Redeemer—that, as we have together ranged the fields of our earthly heritage in a spirit of fervent affection and tender sympathy, so we shall together walk about the heavenly Zion, and tell the towers and palaces thereof—the hope that, with the whole assembled Church of God, and specially with those of our own kinsfolk and acquaintance, who have entered into rest before us, and with those who, yet in the flesh, are, by grace, seeking the Lord and walking in his ways, we shall behold the height and depth, and length and breadth of the love of

* Rev. vii. 9.

Christ—this hope, this blessed hope, sustains thy fond and grateful brother through arduous and anxious duties, while it increases to him the joys, and lightens the sorrows, of his earthly pilgrimage.

And may the blessing of the Most High God be with thee, my reader! If, in his rich and sovereign mercy, He hath taught thee to know something of thyself and of thy Saviour, if He is showing thee the fleeting, unsatisfying, nature of earthly things, and drawing thy desires and affections to a heavenly and incorruptible inheritance,—if He may have touched thee in thy bodily health, or temporal circumstances, or wounded thee to the quick by some domestic bereavement; may not the little history I have brought before thee be, through his grace, for thy profit and for thy comfort?

By another example, as well as by his written declarations, He hath proved to thee that his promises are faithful, that his grace is sufficient,* that He is a Refuge from the

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

storm, a Shadow from the heat,* that they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.† May He greatly increase thy faith, and quicken thy love, and direct thy judgment, and strengthen thy patience, and stimulate thy obedience, till in his own good time, and by his own right way, He shall call thee to the blessed employments, and the holy and glorious company of heaven.

But if thou art still halting between two opinions—if thou art beholding, and consenting in thy mind to what is good, but in thy conduct pursuing what is evil and what is vain;—if the maxims and fashions of a thoughtless and giddy world have yet a strong hold on thee, and the fear of thy fellow-creatures bring a snare to thee;—if thou dare not (if need be) encounter the charge of singularity, and take up *thy* cross for *His* sake, who agonized and died on *His* cross for

* Isa. xxv. 4.

† Isa. xl. 31.

thine;—or if, as it may be, thou art disposed yet to *delay* for a season to think of the things that make for thine everlasting peace;—if thou art clinging to some darling sin, and indulging some vicious propensity—or, should the case be this, that thou art satisfying thyself with an outward form of religion, being a stranger to its spiritual power and reality; under any of these circumstances, let me earnestly and affectionately entreat thee to seek, for thine own possession, and for thine own enjoyment, the blessedness of that religion, which this brief memoir brings before thee. Doubt not but that this blessedness may be thine. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”* “God is love.”† “He delighteth in mercy.”‡ He hath promised, for his dear Son’s sake, to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, § that Spirit who guides into all truth,|| that Spirit who renews

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

† 1 John iv. 8.

‡ Mic. vii. 18.

§ Luke xi. 13.

|| John xvi. 13.

the nature,* and comforts the heart, that Spirit, of whom it is declared, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.† Listen, O listen to the gracious voice of the Good Shepherd. "I am the door of the sheep; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."‡ And again, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."§

Think, O think, how fearfully and wonderfully thou art made!|| By how minute and brittle a tie thou art bound to earth! how easily the delicate mechanism of thy frame may be shattered and dissolved, and thy immortal spirit called in a moment from its earthly house of this tabernacle! Think, O think of *eternity*! Bring side by side, with the things of the eternal world, all that the present world can offer of splendour, of wealth, of pleasure. Weigh, in the balance of the

* Titus iii. 5.

† Rom. viii. 9.

‡ John x. 7, 9.

§ John vii. 37.

|| Psalm cxxxix. 14.

sanctuary, the riches which the moth and rust corrupt, with the unsearchable and imperishable riches of Christ,* and the ever-flowing rivers of pleasure at his right hand. Say, will the worlding's loudest laughter and longest mirth here, compensate for the undying worm hereafter? And how will he expunge that fearful declaration, or avert its execution, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God?"† Again I invite thee, my reader, again I entreat thee, to be happy—happy here—happy for ever. If what I may have brought before thee, of my departed sister, convince thee, that she had chosen "that good part which shall not be taken away from her;"‡ that her religion both served and adorned her in life and in death, and that her ransomed spirit is now with her Saviour, and with the spirits of the just made perfect;§ and if, too, her religion, as manifested in her example,

* Ephes. iii. 8.

† Psal. ix. 17.

‡ Luke x. 42.

§ Heb. xii. 23.

and described in her following writings, be in accordance with the word of the living and true God, how can I entertain for thee a kinder desire, how can I offer for thee a larger prayer, than that her choice may be thy choice, and her God thy God for ever and ever!

THE
FAITHFUL FRIEND.

THE
FAITHFUL FRIEND.

DIALOGUE I.

Emily.—THOUGH so long forsaken by you, my dear Catharine, I would not pass your door without calling. Indeed, self-gratification urged me to do so; for, however easily *you* may give up early friendships and attachments, I own my heart is of a different mould, and I cannot help clinging to those, whom I have once loved.

Catharine.—Such language would surprise me, were I not accustomed to it. A heart that I am daily chiding for clinging too closely to earthly ties, is accused, by those who know it not, of faithlessness and forgetfulness.

Emily.—We can only judge by your actions; and I own it is a strange proof of constancy in attachments, to shun the society of your friends.

Catharine.—Much more deeply interested am I about them, than I ever was before. If I cease to mingle with them in former scenes of folly and dissipation, it is not because I cease to love them; and so would they be compelled to own, could they believe how constantly they are remembered in my prayers.

Emily.—A delightful world would this be, were we all to shew our friendship thus! Be consistent, my dear—go to your cloister. Bid adieu to your friends, so much beloved; and the appendages of your retirement, the dark damp walls, the skull, and the hour-glass, will have the satisfaction of knowing how much you love your friends!

Catharine.—When you know what prayer is, my dear Emily, you will better understand how ardently you may love your friend, and yet refuse to engage in his pursuits and amusements.

Emily.—Your sect give extraordinary reasons for their proceedings. First, they *shun* the society of their friends because they *love* them; and secondly, they condemn all their actions, and refuse to oblige them in any thing.

Catharine.—I can but smile at the term you apply to us, and likewise at your interpretation of my words. But if you will allow me to explain myself further, and will indulge me with a

candid hearing, perhaps I may appear a less enigmatical being.

Emily.—Oh, believe me, I am always willing to hear both sides of a question, which I believe *you* are not.

Catharine.—Not only have I *heard* both sides, I have *experienced* both; and some years ago, your arguments would have been mine. Nevertheless I am really anxious that you should first state your sentiments upon the subject—and may a gracious God give us both the hearing ear, and the understanding heart.

Emily.—Oh! I am sure I am willing to hear, and understand too, if such a thing be possible; but really when people talk of leaving their friends because they love them, I do not think any commonly sensible person could discover a shadow of consistency. To give up the world and its pursuits—to forsake those who have journeyed with you thus far through life, and who have tended to gladden many an hour that might otherwise have passed heavily, I own I think quite wrong and ungrateful. If they were likely to lead you into sin—if through their example you might be liable to contract evil habits, or be led into a vicious course of life, it would be quite a different question. I should be among the first to recommend your shunning them. But when

all their pursuits are so truly innocent—when a ball, a play, or an opera is the very *essence* of their dissipation, you can never make me believe that you are justifiable in thus withdrawing yourself.

Catharine.—No, my love—I never can; but there is One who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can mould them according to his own will. You own, that if I thought they were likely to lead me into sin, I should be justified in shunning them. This is simply one of my reasons for so doing. Once like you I called these amusements innocent, and should have been among the first to condemn those as unnecessarily strict and austere who differed from me.

Emily.—And, pray, who, or what, caused the lamentable change in your sentiments and practice?

Catharine.—The death of a young friend, who from the very midst of such scenes was called from us, first led me to consider the subject seriously. This, I had flattered myself, I had done before; but I found I had been led a kind of willing captive by an ensnaring world. Its pursuits had entirely suited my taste and inclinations, and we are not apt to search diligently and perseveringly for truths, which militate against our most cherished feelings. Nor shall we ever do it until we feel the power of that question,

“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Emily.—But I do not understand why this should have wrought such a complete change in you. You could not have mourned for the individual more than I did. I remember I thought I could never enter a ball-room again, and all the bright colours of the world seemed shaded for a time. Indeed, my spirits were at one time so much depressed, I thought it a *duty* to force myself into society again, for it was never meant, that we should go mourning all our days.

Catharine.—Of this I am well aware. But it was not mourning for the individual which produced the sad change, as you term it, in my character. It was not dwelling upon the cold, lifeless clay, which bade me seek higher joys, and better pleasures than those in which I had been accustomed to engage. It was following the emancipated *spirit* that first led me to consider the nature of the soul, the plan of redemption, and the awfulness of eternity. When I first heard of her death, I joined in the usual conclusion that she was gone to a better world, and that our loss was her gain. While the words

* Matt. xvi. 26.

were yet in my mouth, the thought forcibly occurred to me—but, if in heaven, can she be happy? Here, she loved pleasures and employments, which there she will not find. Should I be happy to join her there? Unless there be a material change in my own character in my passage through the gates of the grave, the society of angels would be irksome to me. I am here inclined to shun those who are speaking of heaven, and heavenly things: indeed, those who take the most delight in religious exercises, and seem to be the most interested about eternal things, are despised by me as enthusiasts, though I profess to desire and expect only such society hereafter. Thus, I trust, was the Holy Spirit through mercy bringing me by degrees to my *right mind*.* I began to be uneasy. I felt that heaven would be no heaven to me—and yet, I had an awful shrinking from hell. I then first earnestly enquired, “What must I do to be saved?”†

Emily.—Or, in other words, you began to distress yourself with needless doubts and fears. But your feelings upon the death of our friend, prove nothing as to the sin of what all *rational* people call *innocent amusements*.

Catharine.—I must say a few words upon

* Mark vi. 15.

† Acts xvi. 30.

what you term needless doubts and fears. Let us lay the axe to the *root* of the tree, my dear friend, and when that is examined, it will be far easier to comment on its branches. Now, Emily, I do earnestly conjure you to cease trifling upon a subject which is of such importance, and answer me, fairly and candidly, a few questions, which anxiety for your eternal welfare urges me to place before you. Do you believe the Scriptures?

Emily.—To be sure I do.

Catharine.—Once, *I* did not, though your reply would have been mine. For when I read, “*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,”* it elicited no question, Am *I* striving? I as earnestly returned to the striving for the things of this world, with full purpose of heart, and to seeking, with all the languor of unconcern, and all the carelessness of unbelief, an inheritance which an alienated heart, and earth-bound affections, could not really desire. The fact was, I had some vain and indistinct ideas that heaven was a place of happiness, and therefore desirable; but of the *nature* of that happiness, and of my own *fitness* to enjoy it, I had never enquired. I should have *said* that I

* Luke xiii. 24.

believed the Scriptures, whilst its all-important warnings, its awful threatenings, its glorious promises, and astonishing facts, were received with a coldness, which could only have been generated by *unbelief*. What do you think of those Scriptures, "Cursed is every one that *continueth* not in *all* things, which are written in the book of the law to do them?" *—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" †—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ‡

Emily.—That is one of the faults I find with you—the selecting detached texts to suit your purpose. I doubt not, if I were to examine the context, I should find that they were chiefly applicable to the time in which they were written, and to the people to whom they were addressed. For the *last* you mentioned, we cannot be sufficiently thankful.

Catharine.—Your accusation, my dear friend, I must beg leave to say, is wholly unfounded. I am always particularly cautious in examining the context, that I may more fully discover all that the Holy Spirit, who indited it, would have us to learn. But those three passages, I selected

* Gal. iii. 10. † John iii. 3. ‡ John iii. 16.

as too comprehensive and simple to need the context for explanation. But the *first* I mentioned, is one which it is the interest of *the natural man* to explain away, for it pronounces him to be under the curse of God. Let him read the twentieth chapter of Exodus, his deceitful heart will tell him,—I have not broken any of these commandments; I am safe. Open to him our Saviour's spiritual explanation of them. To be angry *without a cause*, is by him considered as *murder*, because it is the seed of that, which needs but the breath of temptation to nourish it. These comments of our Lord, which tell of One whose all-piercing eye is on the lurking motive—who knows the unholy thought—the unhallowed desire—the vain, the carnal views—these place all men by nature under the curse of God, and constrain us to own, that we individually are exposed to that curse, as not having continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The strictly moral man, the amiable domestic character, shrinks from this, and places only the profane and the murderer under such an account. Does *he* then believe the word of God? And say, my friend, do *you*?

Emily.—I certainly never believed myself to be under the curse of God, nor do I understand how the *pleasures* of religion, of which I hear you

speak so much, and such a conviction as that, can in any way be compatible.

Catharine.—I will tell you, my dear friend. Our good and skilful Physician would have us know the *extent* of the disease, that we may duly appreciate the remedy. The Saviour will never really be prized, till the Holy Spirit has performed his first work in the heart, to “convince us of sin.”* With the name of Jesus we end our prayers. There are a few vague notions of his merits making up for our deficiencies. The accounts we have been accustomed to hear from our earliest childhood, of his lowly, suffering, life, and agonizing death, pass printless over our heart; and those who mourn the sin which caused these bitter sufferings, or who speak with any feeling beyond coldness, of this, their all-glorious Substitute, we are brought up to consider as poor weak-minded people, who, in their simplicity, know no better! Now, is it not so? And while reflecting upon this state of every man by nature, are we not the more likely to understand what the Saviour means, when he says, “Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again?” †

Emily.—I think you speak rather hyperbolically, which I believe is another fashion

* John xvi. 8.

† John iii. 7.

among you. I do not think we are all in the desperately wicked state in which you would prove us to be; nor do I *wish* to think so, though you would fain make me believe, that such a conviction is consistent with the *pleasantness* and *peace* which you profess to find in your new religion.—And as to salvation through Christ, I am sure, if any one had asked me, *How are you to be saved?* I should have said, *Through Christ alone.*

Catharine.—And if, labouring under a deceitful disease, you were not aware of it, but thought yourself in tolerable health, would you, if cured, impute your cure simply to your physician? or would you not be likely to say, I was not very ill, and therefore might have been cured without him? Once again, I must repeat, that, until you are enabled to take God at his word, and to feel that you “are gone out of the way, that you are altogether become unprofitable, that there is none that doeth good, no not one,”* you will never *value* the Saviour—you will never *love* the Saviour—you will never really seek the assistance of the Holy Spirit—you will never know the need of regenerating grace. Religion will be a code of laws, to keep those who are worse than

* Rom. iii. 12.

yourself in order; and a something, of which you wish to have just a sufficient portion, to keep up a name among men; or to resort to, when sickness or old age comes upon you.

Emily.—Indeed, Catharine, I do think you are most severe and uncharitable.

Catharine.—Believe me, mine is not the language of *condemnation*, but of *experimental knowledge*. I am exactly portraying what I used to feel, and what were my own sentiments in former times; but I was not aware of them, and knew nothing of my dark estate, till it pleased God to enlighten my understanding, and to visit my heart with his salvation. Now, I thank God, I have learned other language than that of condemnation. Self-convicted—self-accused, my mouth is closed. I see in others what *I* once was, and pray that I may daily be more thankful for that grace which alone maketh me to differ, and more humbled by the view of that darkness, from which sovereign grace and mercy brought me. But, that I may avoid even the appearance of dictating to one, at whose feet I hope one day to sit and learn, let me simply put one question to you,—“What think you of Christ?” *

* Matt. xxii. 42.

Emily.—You make me smile at the simple question which followed so alarming a preface. What do I think of Christ? It is a strange one too; and perhaps more difficult to be answered than I at first imagined: that he is the Son of God—that he took our nature upon him—and that he suffered every indignity to save us from the wrath of God.

Catharine.—But what wrath have *you* excited in God?

Emily.—Oh, you know, we are all *sinners*. Ever since the fall of Adam, perfection is not to be found; so we needed an atonement for our sins, and must not depend upon our own righteousness. But I am not accustomed to talk so much upon the subject as you are, and whatever feelings I may have upon it, I cannot distinctly express them.

Catharine.—How well I can enter into all your undefined feelings, and generalizing views, my Emily! Well do I “know the heart of a stranger,”* for I too was once a stranger. Believe me, religion is an *individual* concern, and it is either *every* thing or *nothing*. It is either that to which the Scriptures compare it, “a hidden treasure,”† for which we must diligently search—

* Exod. xxiii. 9.

† Matt. xiii. 44, 46.

“ the pearl of great price,” beyond the worth of all besides—or it is not worthy a thought, and all the Bible is false. Simple and beautiful in itself is the Gospel plan ; it is as a bright ray of light, which comes straight from heaven to earth. But the ways of man are crooked and perverse, and he wanders far from his God. While our hearts and affections are resting upon the troublesome waves of time, all will appear equally vacillating and unstable. You remember, perhaps, Cowper’s sweet lines upon the subject.

“ Oh ! how unlike the complex works of man
Heav’n’s easy, artless, unencumber’d plan !
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile.
From ostentation, as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.”

Though all the three Persons in the ever blessed Trinity are engaged to bring one poor offending worm to heaven, yet simple, as it is wonderful, is the plan of redemption. The first transgression brought with it all the train of evils, which we may now witness in ourselves, and in the world. Man became unfitted for communion with God. From his presence he hid himself. “ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Not

one.”* Sinful children of sinful parents, we might all have been justly left to perish, had not mercy devised a plan in which every attribute of the Deity might be satisfied—Justice demanded death—death temporal and death eternal; “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”† How is man to be saved? He is lost—is ruined—is undone. Who but God could have devised a plan, in which “Mercy and truth should meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other?”‡ Who would have hoped that “God so loved the world”§ which had rebelled against him, that the hand which formed it should be nailed to the accursed tree—that the voice which spake a chaos into such a world, “so clothed with beauty for rebellious man,” should be heard groaning in anguish! But I need not amplify. Your historical knowledge of the Scriptures is sufficiently correct; but these facts have ceased to interest or affect, from our being so long accustomed to hear of them: as daily and hourly mercies are neglected and unacknowledged, because the hand that bestows them is never withdrawn.

Emily.—I do not think you have told me

* Job xiv. 4.

† Gen. ii. 17.

‡ Psalm lxxxv. 10.

§ John iii. 16.

any thing new, my dear Catharine. I thought there must be something that I had never heard of, which had effected so mighty a change in you.

Catharine.—Tell me then what you think of *God* becoming incarnate—suffering all the trials and temptations of that state, into which rebellion against himself had brought his creatures? Sinless himself, to become the inhabitant of a sinful world—and bearing the curse, which would have sunk every soul of the apostate world into hell?

Emily.—It was indeed a work of mercy, and should excite in us the liveliest gratitude and love.

Catharine.—And tell me, Emily, when those feelings are excited for our fellow-creatures, how do they display themselves?

Emily.—You could not have applied to one who could have answered that question more experimentally than myself. I could sacrifice my every interest, my every comfort, for my friend—no circumstance, *not even coldness and neglect on their part*, can induce me to forsake them. Their joys are mine; their sorrows are mine. Indeed, I may truly say, my friend is a second self.

Catharine.—Is Jesus a friend worthy of such regard as this?

Emily.—Yes, truly, and much more. Indeed

it would seem that my heart has not been much affected by his work of mercy—for I must candidly own that the coldness of my feelings towards him, contrasted with those of which my heart is capable, is rather unaccountable. I think I should be happier, if I could love him more, for I do believe that He would never disappoint the most sanguine hope, or chill, by unkindness, those affections, which are placed upon him.

Catharine.—O, try him, my beloved friend ! Venture all upon Him, and I will promise that you shall never meet with disappointment ; and when you know that joy, that peace, which ensues from having our affections thus fixed on the *Rock of Ages*, you will also understand how it is possible to love our friends, yet refuse to accompany them along the broad way which leadeth to destruction. You will know that that is the truest, the most valuable love, which shrinks not from the scorn and displeasure of the object beloved, rather than countenance those pursuits, those sentiments, which may endanger the soul.

Emily.—But I have not seen them in that point of view, therefore you would not have me profess what I do not feel ? Nothing I dislike so much as hypocrisy.

Catharine.—The religion, of which I have been speaking, will more effectually than any other

guard your heart against hypocrisy. It tells us "to cease from man,"* that "the fear of man bringeth a snare."† It teaches us to pray for that single eye, that single heart, which seeks to do all to the glory of God. It teaches us, that there is no profit in those things whereof we are afterwards ashamed—and will not shame eventually belong to those, who are studying the manners and opinions of a world, that is, with themselves, passing swiftly away, and who have been regardless of that voice, which hath so distinctly declared, that "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new?"‡ When the Holy Spirit effects that change in your heart, Emily, your question will not be, How far may I enter into worldly amusements without offending God? Is a ball an innocent pastime? May I attend the theatre? You will rather exclaim, "What shall I render unto the Lord for the benefits He hath done unto me?"§ That Holy Spirit who inspired St. Paul to write, "All things become new," will exemplify the truth of this assertion in your own heart. "The Spirit itself will bear witness with your spirit,"

* Isa. ii. 22.

† Prov. xxix. 25.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17.

§ Psal. cxvi. 12.

that these things are so. Your desires will be new, your pleasures will be new—your cares, your fears, your views, will be new.

Emily.—I wish they were, for I am weary of the old ! I am sure when you come to analyse the world, you find stamped upon every ingredient, “vanity and vexation of spirit;” but I never anticipated having a taste for better joys till we left the world ; so went grovelling on with my poor fellow-mortals.

Catharine.—And did you think, that, in your passage through the gates of the grave, you would acquire this taste for better things ? that your soul would become fitted for heavenly communion ?

Emily.—No ; I never thought that, because I always expected an immediate entrance into another world.

Catharine.—Then now, Emily, tell me—seriously put the question to yourself. If an immediate summons were to arrest all your gay companions, with yourself, and convey you to another world, do you think that heaven would be your appropriate mansion ? Do you think that hearts, thus interested, thus engaged in worldly things, could rejoice in the sudden transition to heavenly joys ? Nothing that is unholy can enter there. Do you not think it more likely, should a party

of our despised ones be assembled together to read the Scriptures, to speak of Him whom their soul loveth, to sing His praises, or to unite in prayer for a perishing world—that a summons to join the saints above would be less untimely than to the other party?

Emily.—I should think so, if their hearts are really engaged. But I have known some sad hypocrites, who go about preaching and praying to gain a great name for sanctity among men.

Catharine.—We must leave judgment to God, as we cannot see the heart. Our blessed Lord seems to have prepared us for such lamentable instances, by permitting a *Judas* to be among his few followers. We must not condemn *all*, because some are found guilty; but rather follow the example of the rest of his disciples, who, upon hearing that their Lord was to be betrayed, looked not around them in self-confidence, to demand, “Lord, is it *he*?” but turned their eyes within, and fearfully enquired, “Lord, is it *I*?”* While judging others, we do but condemn ourselves; and it would be well, if we were often to call to mind our Saviour’s words respecting one, who was accused by the triumphant Pharisees, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”† What would you

* Matt. xxvi. 22

† John viii. 7.

say to me, my dear friend, if I were to tell you to turn your eyes within, and to correct the hypocrisy *there*, before you seek it elsewhere?

Emily.—I hear that accusation with the most perfect unconcern, because if I am guilty of every other sin, I am free from *that*.

Catharine.—*Who* says every Sabbath-day, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,” and leaves the church, calling it *cant* and *hypocrisy* to speak of oneself as such? *Who*, at the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, declares, that the *burden of her sins is intolerable*, and calls those canting hypocrites who tell her they *feel* the burthen?

Emily.—The language is very strong certainly, but do you think it is meant for *every body*?

Catharine.—Why be so *hypocritical* as to express sentiments you do not feel, if such expressions are not meant for you? Why not have a Liturgy formed for those very good sort of people, who may assemble to thank God they are not as other men are? And leave, to us poor Publicans, the heart-consoling cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner?”*

Emily.—I sometimes wish I *could* feel more interest upon religious subjects; but perhaps I may at some future day.

* Luke xviii. 13.

Catharine.—Do more than *wish*, my dear friend. An old writer says, “The way to hell is paved with lazy *wishes*.” Seek earnestly that “new heart, and right spirit,”* which are the gift of God. When you deeply feel, that in yourself, “dwelleth no good thing,”†—when you can enter into St. Paul’s experience, and know something of the conflict of which he speaks in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans—*then* will you seek a Saviour—*then* will your heart rejoice in the Saviour—*then* out of the abundance of that heart will your mouth speak, and I shall number my first, my best-loved friend, among those, who by a thoughtless and ungodly world are styled hypocrites, and enthusiasts, but who are endeavouring to “worship God in the Spirit—who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”‡

Emily.—I have no doubt, my dear Catharine, that I might be happier than I have ever been before, though at this moment I see nothing but a dark and dreary void. I feel that what is usually called *pleasure* is but vanity and vexation, but I find no interest in higher things.

Catharine.—When “the earth was without form and void,”—when “darkness was upon the

* Psal. li. 10.

† Rom. vii. 18.

‡ Phil. iii. 3.

face of the deep," God said, "Let there be light, and there was light."* His hand is not shortened; his ear is not heavy. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee," and yet more, "thou shalt glorify me."† My friend, who has been so long feeding upon the husks of the world, shall eventually arise, and go unto her Father, who will see her, while yet a "great way off."‡ Her feet will be set upon a rock, "and a new song shall be put into her mouth, even praise unto her God."§

Emily.—Oh, you must not be too sanguine. Good impressions are, alas! too much like the early dew, sparkling awhile, and looking fair and bright, in the rising sun-beams, but quickly vanishing away. The very next time that I enter a ball-room, or a play-house, I shall be quite my former self. The sound of the music, and the gay *coup d'œil*, will renew all my convictions, that you, and such as you, ought not to withdraw yourselves wholly from us, as you might often check many a thoughtless sally, many a foolish jest, and keep mirth and hilarity within proper bounds. It would be much less selfish of you, than giving us up, and I should always prefer

* Gen. i. 2, 3.

† Luke xv. 22.

‡ Psal. i. 15.

§ Psal. xl. 3.

your society to any I could possibly meet with in those heartless scenes.

Catharine.—I would thank you, my dear Emily, for still desiring my society, but let me rather say to you, “Come thou with us, and we will do thee *good*,”* which perhaps could not be added to *your* invitation. “Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them,”†, says that word, which I pray may be the lamp for my poor erring feet. Besides, were there no other passage throughout the Scriptures, explicit upon the subject, the effects which you own are produced upon yourself by entering into such scenes, would form, in my opinion, a sufficiently conclusive argument against them.

Emily.—But they would not have the same effect upon *you*, you are so steady, and so different from any of us.

Catharine.—And what hath made me to differ? My nature is equally weak and vacillating. Of this, I am so well aware, that when I pray, “Lead me not into temptation,” ‡ I shun placing myself in the very midst of it, lest He, who will not be mocked, should suffer that temptation to overcome me, which I did not choose to avoid.

* Num. x. 29. † Jer. xv. 19. ‡ Matt. vi. 13.

Emily.—We all, upon reflection, must see the folly of many of our pursuits ; but still, Catharine, I think there is an appointed time for every thing. In youth, and healthful vigour, those amusements seem natural to that joyousness of heart, that elasticity of mind, which instinctively bound from every thing that might repress their energy.

Catharine.—Or, in other words, we ought to give the spring of life to the world, and its winter, if permitted to see it, to God ; whereas He says, “ Remember now thy Creator in the days of *thy youth*, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”*

Emily.—But do you think that our merciful God requires us to be grave, and to wear all the thoughtfulness of old age, at the season of life when He himself has given us health, and strength, and spirits, to enjoy the good things of this life ?

Catharine.—And who said such thoughtfulness and gravity were requisite ? Do we not read, “ Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again say rejoice ?” † The joy and laughter of the world are compared to the “ crackling of thorns under a pot ;” ‡ a joy that is “ but for a mo-

* Eccl. xii. 1.

† Phil. iv. 4.

‡ Eccl. vii. 6.

ment," while the joy which our God bestows upon His people is an "*everlasting joy*," a "*fulness of joy, exceeding joy!*"

Emily.—I own, Catharine, this is what I have never been able to comprehend in you. Though you talk so much of the joys and pleasures of religion, you generally look thoughtful and sad when you happen to be thrown among us.

Catharine.—And do I *always* look so?

Emily.—Oh, far from it. It is almost provoking to see how animated and happy you appear among your new friends, and how thoroughly all your wishes and pursuits blend.

Catharine.—And perhaps, with a very little reflection, you can solve this enigma yourself.

Emily.—I shall be owning what I am scarcely willing to admit, that, when with us, you are disliking and condemning all we do, and find the pursuits of your new companions congenial to your taste.

Catharine.—I am not *condemning*, my dear friend; that is a word I cannot admit when it relates to our fellow-creatures. A tide of feeling rushes into my heart when I find myself among my former friends and early scenes. Tender recollections of the past, of former interests, overwhelm me. I see those I love, treading in paths which, if followed, would lead to destruction. I

see those I love, finding music in those chains which I have been enabled to cast off. Great is the conflict. For *Nature* says, "Do indulge them, and make them once more happy and at ease by entering into their views and pursuits." *Grace* says, "If thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, then thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him."* *Nature* says, "I cannot give up these my earliest friends! their every interest has been mine from my infancy, and how ungrateful will they think me!" *Grace* whispers, "He that loveth father or mother, son, daughter, wife, or children, more than me, is not worthy of me." *Nature* says, "I fear their displeasure." The word of God tells me, "The fear of man bringeth a snare."† With these conflicting feelings, how can I be at ease among them?

Emily.—And yet you promise me a happiness in your paths, which I have never known before!

Catharine.—Would that I could impart to my dear friend some little portion of that peace which indeed passeth the understanding of the natural man—of "that joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not!"; She would no longer call

* *Deut. xiii. 6, 7, 8.* † *Prov. xxix. 25.*

‡ *Prov. xiv. 10.*

that pleasure, for which she is up early, and late takes rest. She would find that to "serve the Lord with gladness,"* is better worth, than spending her money for that which is not bread, and her labour for that which satisfieth not. But we have a gracious God to deal with, who does not deceive us on this point. The world and Satan promise fair, and disappoint fatally. But He, whom we desire to serve, would have us "count the cost."† He cheers his people with the anticipation of the rest which remaineth for them, but He tells them that this life must be as a *warfare*, a *race*, a *pilgrimage*. Look around you, and see if you should have discovered the resemblance. See the anxiety manifested in a race—the laying aside every weight, every hindrance—the eye fixed upon the goal—every nerve strained—every sinew stretched! "So run," says the Apostle, "that ye may obtain."‡ Are *you* thus running? Are your friends thus running? In *war*, does not the soldier buckle on his armour? does he not exert his every power to keep off the blows of his adversaries, and to gain the victory over his foes? His sword, his helmet, his shield, are all kept in constant use. *So fight I*, says St. Paul. And are *you* thus fighting? Life is also compared to

* Psalm c. 2. † Luke xiv. 28. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 24.

a pilgrimage—with his loins girt and his staff in his hand, the pilgrim sets forward. Many are the storms and tempests that assail him; but—he is travelling *home*. Many things may be permitted to harass and perplex him on his way—pleasures to allure, and many a voice to call, and many a hand to beckon him from his path—but he is travelling home, and nothing shall arrest his progress, or turn him back. Confessing that he is a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, he declares plainly that he seeks a country—and truly, if he had been mindful of that country whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned: but now he desires a better country, that is a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called his God, for He hath “prepared for him a city.”* They who have been as pilgrims, looking for no continuing city here, have one prepared for them by their God. Do *you* feel as a stranger and sojourner on earth? Our days on the earth are also compared to “a shadow”†—our life to “a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”‡ Are *you* and your friends living as if you kept in mind that “the time is short?”§

* Heb. xi. 14, 15, 16. † Ps. cxliv. 4. ‡ James iv. 14.
§ 1 Cor. vii. 29.

Emily.—I know that life is compared to such fleeting things.

Catharine.—But *known* truths are not always *influential*. If they were, I should see you “running the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus.” *

Emily.—Indeed, my dear Catharine, I do wish to serve the Lord; but I cannot see the necessity of making oneself so singular. It appears so presumptuous to set up one’s judgment against all the world.

Catharine.—Not quite as presumptuous, I think, as setting it up against *God*. He hath said, “Ye *cannot* serve two masters,”† and you will find it so, my dear friend. To reconcile two such perfectly opposite principles is impossible. God says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”‡ The world teaches us, that nothing is so easy as to be a Christian. If we are baptized, and gain a good name among men, by alms-giving, good-humoured compliances, and freedom from gross offences, all will go on smoothly, and we shall find ourselves in heaven at last! But God says, that the gate is strait—the way is narrow, and

* Heb. xii. 2. † Matt. vi. 24. ‡ 1 John ii. 15.

few find it—that “the world must be crucified unto us, and we unto the world”*—that we must “strive”—“must take up our cross daily,”†—we must be esteemed “fools, if we would be truly wise;”—that our “affections must be set upon things above, not on things of the earth.”‡ Oh! remember, my friend, there is such a thing as a mere *nominal* religion—a religion whose seat is in *the head*, instead of the *heart*; a religion which will always be current on *earth*, but which will never pass in heaven.

Emily.—I have some misgivings, lest that should be my religion. But I always observe, that you good people, who would be thought very charitable, love to dwell upon the *few* who are to be saved; whereas that spirit of exclusion I particularly dislike, and also the system of making God to appear a hard master.

Catharine.—Would that I could think *all the world* would be saved, and how my heart would leap for joy! The prayers, the tears, the anxious watchings over those whom I love, would then be spared me. But it is *God's* word, and “I must not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom.”§ It is He who says that few frequent the narrow way

* Gal. vi. 14.

‡ Col. iii. 2.

† Luke ix. 23.

§ Deut. iv. 2.

compared with the followers of the broad and easy path. Do I dwell upon it as a *pleasing* subject? Do I love in the spirit of exclusion to account myself one of the few, and arrogate to myself the favour of God? No; but I would pray that I, and all whom I love, may be led so to consider our Lord's words, that they may stimulate us in our course heavenwards. Experience will, I trust, one day prove to you, that those who are thus accused of narrowing the way to eternal life, would joyfully welcome every human being therein, and consider no happiness equal to that of winning a soul from destruction's paths. These misinterpretations, I have keenly felt, and my lips have been closed by them, but

“Affection's anxious voice to silence driven,
Suppress'd on earth, perhaps was heard in heaven.”

And why should we so deeply feel such accusations? He whose love embraced a fallen world—who came to seek, in poverty and toil, the lost and the wretched, and to save souls polluted by rebellion and sin, He who shrunk not from all the torture to which the redemption of such a world exposed him—He it was, whose life pronounced this stimulating assertion. Those gracious lips, from which fell nothing but accents of mercy and compassion, uttered the solemn ad-

monition, and asserted the awful fact. His love to his people permitted not the concealment of it; and my love to you, my dear friend, and to those to whom my heart is so closely and fondly united, forbids my seeking to lessen the authority of God's word.

Emily.—But you should not conclude that all who do not think exactly the same as yourself, are necessarily going on in the broad way.

Catharine.—Far, very far, be it from me to think anything of the sort! and why should you accuse me of such bigotry?

Emily.—I hear that you call all those who enter more into society than yourself, *worldly minded*.

Catharine.—Indeed, my dear Emily, I may say with David, “they laid to my charge things that I knew not.” We have each a path of duty assigned to us. Some are called upon to follow professions, which lead them into the very heart of a busy, bustling world. But when trials and temptations are met with in the straightforward course of *duty*, strength and grace proportioned to the day will be mercifully bestowed, and God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to withstand. In our daily avocations, we have, must have, intercourse with the world; and, in that world, we should seek to be

burning and shining lights. We should undertake nothing upon which we dare not ask the blessing of God ; and how doubly sweet and interesting does each duty become, when performed in reference to spiritual things ! The daughter, the wife, the mother, the mistress of a family, have all duties to perform, and those duties graciously marked out for them. Some are so circumstanced, that they would be shrinking from their duty, were they to seclude themselves from society. But let them never dare to go, where their influence may not be beneficial, and their example safely followed. Let consistency of conduct mark their Christian course ; and if they do not gain the disapprobation of the world, “ the disciple will not be as his master.”* By compliances, which our consciences would condemn, we should gain a *ready smile*, and an *abiding contempt*—for the world knows that balls, and plays, and operas, and revellings, and such like, are not consistent with our profession, as taught in the Bible, and however hasty that world may be in its condemnation, it would be among the first to discover inconsistency. But the world, thanks be to God, will not judge us at last. He who changes not, and whose word

* Matthew x. 25.

is unchangeable, will, by that word, try us eventually.

Emily.—It certainly is but reasonable to allow, that we ought to endeavour to frame our conduct according to the precepts of the word, by which we shall be tried. I fear my conduct would not stand such a test. Indeed, my dear Catharine, I must candidly own, that my affection for you has led me lately to study more that book, which I knew was *your* guide, and it has sometimes made me uneasy. But you must, I think, own, that some of your party act very inconsistently, and by their narrow minded views, uncourteous manners, and technical expressions, tend to disgust, and damp, any rising feeling of interest.

Catharine.—I *do* agree with you. But let us not impute to their *religion*, that which does not belong to it. I would not refer you to the example or opinions of any human being, nor would I have you call any man master upon earth. We are all fallible—all weak—all erring—all inconsistent. But I would confidently refer you to that word which will remain, when all the fashion and opinions of this world have passed away for ever; and to that teaching, in following which you cannot err.

Emily.—But do not weak-minded people some-

times *fancy* they are taught of God, and are inspired, when they are only following the bent of their own over-heated imaginations?

Catharine.—Such instances have occurred. But to the same word of promise would I again refer you. There it is written, “If a man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,”* “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”† Where there is a sincere and unreserving desire to *know*, and to *do* the will of God, that will shall be made plain, and strength and wisdom given to follow it. “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”‡ The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; therefore we shall never see a humble suppliant at the throne of grace either rejected or led astray. To humble him, and to do him good at his latter end, or to make him a yet closer walker with his God, he may be permitted sometimes to try his own strength and wisdom, and to reap the fruits of so doing, but it shall eventually prove among the *all things*, which “work together for good, to those that love God.”§
Emily.—I fear all things are not working to-

* John vii. 17. † Jer. xxix. 13. ‡ Matt. v. 6.

§ Rom. viii. 28.

gether for *my* good, for I am so unlike you, and therefore cannot be classed among those who love God; for I am convinced that all those things which I have been condemning in your conduct, result from a greater love to him than what *we* feel, and from a desire to do his will. Indeed, that heart which I have been accustomed to prize as so goodly a fabric, seems to me now in a wild dilapidated state. As I told you before, my dear Catharine, there seems a dark and dreary void. My judgment condemns, what my inclinations approve.

Catharine.—Thankful am I, my dearest friend, for the conflict. Your *strong man* was well armed, nevertheless he cannot keep his “goods in peace.”* I may, indeed, humbly and joyfully hope that the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon your soul, though mists and exhalations dim his brightness, and keep you cold and cheerless. You look upon *them*—you look upon *yourself*, and—are cold still. Then look unto *Jesus*—dwell upon his work of love, and while you are thus musing, the fire will kindle. Seek that faith which rests not satisfied in a *general* conviction, that *Christ died for sinners*; but that appropriating faith, which dwells with holy gratitude and

* Luke xi. 21.

joy in your own *personal* interest in that redemption. Seek that spirit of adoption, whereby you may cry from a heart overflowing with filial love, "Abba, Father."* Seek that faith, which, as the Apostle expresses it, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."† Mark the strength of the expression, Emily, and compare it with the account you or I should have given of it in former times. To have acknowledged, if asked, that it included a belief that good people would go to Heaven, and bad people to Hell—and that Christ died for the world—would have been the sum and substance of our theoretical faith: and to have said *much* upon the subject at all, would have savoured, in our estimation, of *cant*, and perhaps *antinomianism*; for to dwell upon the efficacy and importance of faith, and to be inimical to good works, were, with me, synonymous terms. Then once again, before we part, let me urge you, my dear friend, to follow the example of the Bereans, who were called *more noble* than some others, inasmuch as "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so,"‡ and were not led away by popular opinions, and prevailing conclusions.

* Rom. viii. 15. † Heb. xi. 1. ‡ Acts xvii. 11.

Emily.—I thank you, my dear friend, for your kind interest and advice, which I hope to be enabled to follow, for I do indeed believe, that there is a *reality* in your religion, which I have never experienced.

Catharine.—Indeed there is! A reality purchased at no lower a price than the blood of Jesus. A reality which cheers the Christian's heart in adversity, and enhances his joys in prosperity. A reality, of which he can never scarcely lisp the thousandth part here, but which will tune his tongue throughout the countless ages of eternity. What can I wish more for my dearest friend, than that she may experience it herself?

Emily.—I thank you once again for all your kindness to me. Forgive me for ever doubting your love.

DIALOGUE II.

Emily.—How anxious have I been to see you, my dear friend, and yet I almost dreaded an interview.

Catharine.—And why, may I ask, my dear Emily?

Emily.—Because when last we parted, you probably thought that I should act as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, and not disgrace my high and holy calling, as I fear I have done.

Catharine.—Perhaps, too, I am unreasonable enough to expect that the new-born babe will have all the powers and faculties of riper age! and shall look in him for the active feet, the eloquent tongue, the matured judgment!

Emily.—No, I am aware such would not be your expectations. Nevertheless, I fear that charity itself must have blamed me, had it witnessed how often I have shrunk from the cross—how often I have acted, as though I were ashamed of owning under whose banner I desired henceforth to enlist myself.—But perhaps I had better


not tell you.—You may despise me, and withhold from me those instructions which it is my earnest desire to follow, though, from my own sinfulness and infirmities, I am continually acting in direct opposition to them.

Catharine.—Do not distress me, my dear Emily, by supposing, for a moment, that censure and condemnation will be elicited by a statement of your difficulties. Every Christian warrior has his share, and I should have given you some account of my own, but that we have scarcely met since it has pleased God to interest your heart upon eternal things; and before that was the case, I should have spoken of things wholly incomprehensible to you. David says, “Come unto me *all ye that fear God*, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.”* To enter upon spiritual mercies, and spiritual trials, with those who have had no experience in such things, is, I think, as unwise as descanting upon colours to the blind, and upon sounds to the deaf, and is one method, among others, of *casting pearls before swine*. But now that you know something of these things, we have only to compare notes; and though our experience may be very different, owing to the dissimilarity of our natural dispo-

* Psalm lxi. 16.

sitions, and of existing circumstances, yet you will find in me more of sympathy than of censure.

Emily.—How kind this is of you, thus to encourage me! The consciousness of my own remissness, and the knowledge of your high attainments in religion, have made me shrink from seeking an opportunity of intercourse with you, though I may sincerely own, that your severest censures would have been more acceptable to me than all the praise that man could bestow, because my conscience would have testified, that the one was merited, and the other was not; and the earnest desire for instruction in the things which belong to real peace, eventually overcame my fearfulness. And now, I hope that you will not shrink from condemning all that you disapprove. Amidst all my weakness and sins, I can say with unmingled sincerity, that I would rather my feet should be lacerated with thorns every step of my way Zionwards, than that they should tread upon the fairest flowers in the broad and easy road to destruction. When the fear of man has been the most prevalent, my heart has yearned for liberty from that bondage, and I have painfully struggled against it. Often, too, my religious friends may have interpreted my conduct into an *endeavour* to serve God and mammon, whereas I may truly say, that it was never either



my desire, or my expectation, to effect such an impossibility. But I unconsciously followed a crooked way, to win others into a *straight* one. Again, from natural pliancy of mind, unusual timidity of disposition, a nervous temperament, and an overpowering shrinking from wounding the feelings of others, I have been vacillating and faithless.

Catharine.—Would you dislike entering more circumstantially upon the past? And keep constantly in mind, that *I* have a list of sins and weaknesses to impart, which will, in return, claim your sympathy and prayers; and that when I presume to impart instruction, or give advice, a double portion of both is requisite for myself.

Emily.—I was most anxious to do this, but that I felt unwilling to impose such a task upon your patience. I believe you are aware that my first steps in the Christian path were among trials and difficulties, the most wounding and distressing to the natural feelings. I was called upon to oppose the wishes of some of my own family—of beloved relations, whose marked and peculiar approbation and affection had been excited by those very qualities so inimical to my progress in the Christian race. Light hearted, and ceaselessly gay and cheerful, I had enlivened for them many an hour, which might otherwise have passed

heavily. My pliancy of mind, timidity of character, and strong affections, had made their very wishes commands. Too often these qualities and these feelings were indulged, when they ought to have been opposed; though in each crooked step, into which they might lead me, I never lost sight of the spiritual interests of those I loved, and was uniformly seeking, however erroneously, to win them into, and follow myself, the way which leadeth unto life eternal.

Catharine.—Indeed, my dear friend, you have been placed under very trying circumstances, and, perhaps, an accusing conscience, for making sinful compliances, added poignancy to them.

Emily.—This was not exactly the case as to *facts*, though self-condemnation was equally the result of my conduct. When my dear relations were urgent with me to do those things, which *they* considered as innocent, but which *I* could not consistently, nor conscientiously, accede to, I have been kept, I am thankful to say, from doing that which my heart condemned, but I had not courage to declare what were my real feelings, or motives. Thus, by *forming excuses*, I evaded present trials, and heaped up for myself future difficulties.

Catharine.—These *daily calls* to take up our cross are far more trying to nature than costly

sacrifices. But we should remember that our baptismal vow not only includes "fighting manfully" under our Lord's banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, but also that we shall "not be ashamed to *confess* the faith of Christ crucified," which, with your disposition, was probably the more difficult task of the two; for nature would *get the start*, if I may so express it, when taken by surprise, and would shrink from the obloquy which an immediate and open avowal of your sentiments would excite; whereas, when time and opportunity were given you for seeking strength and guidance from the Lord, you were enabled practically and openly to withstand that, which in theory you only dare avoid by subterfuge. Therefore the power of grace was strikingly displayed in your weakness.

Emily.—Indeed, whenever I have been able to oppose, I was peculiarly called upon to testify, "yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me,"* for truly every natural feeling pleaded compliance.

Catharine.—And doubtless you found that undecided conduct, in the first instance, only insured a constant recurrence of the same difficulties.

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Emily.—Indeed it was so. The excuses for not complying with the wishes of those near and dear to me, respecting a participation in all the pursuits and amusements of the world, served but for the present time, and I was soon called upon to pass over the same ground. This much discouraged me, for I watched with painful anxiety for the increase of that strength which would overcome those difficulties.

Catharine.—And did not you apply to Him who is omnipotent, and ready to save?

Emily.—I may almost say that I did *pray without ceasing*.^{*} But I have thought lately, that I must have “asked *amiss*.”[†] Even the timid and blinded spirit took the lead in prayer, and instead of asking for grace and strength, to become a good soldier of Christ, I besought with tears that my trials might be *removed*. Now tell me, my dear friend, your sentiments upon the subject.

Catharine.—Whenever called upon to act contrary to your principles, I would simply and candidly state your objections. Humbly and meekly give the reason of your fears, as well as of your hopes. Not only then will you enjoy the happy consciousness that you have not shrunk from the

^{*} 1 Thess. v. 17.

[†] James iv. 3.

Cross, but you will also find that one hard-fought battle will do more towards winning the day, than a thousand skirmishes.

Emily.—Painful experience has indeed taught me that nothing is gained by *them*, but self-condemnation, the contempt of those whose displeasure you would fain avoid, and increased intricacy to your own path.

Catharine.—Did you find that the fear of the world, or a desire for its approbation, was a snare to you?

Emily.—They probably might have been, but that the one great and absorbing struggle with my own beloved relations at home, made all other trials pass comparatively printless over my mind. Naturally unambitious, my own heart sought not the praise of men, though many a bitter pang did it experience when conscious of the disapprobation of early friends and companions; and had it not been for the severer anguish at home, keenly should I have felt the growing coldness and neglect of those around me. But I am anxious for directions suggested by your longer experience, and, indeed, if I know my own heart at all, I am willing implicitly to follow on, in whatever path you may recommend.

Catharine.—I pray that I may be enabled to speak a word in season to you, my dear friend;

but to the Word of God I would refer you, and only as far as that sanctions my counsels, would I have you listen to me.

We read that “the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* I am satisfied that you had no desire to compromise your principles, or to attempt the unsatisfactory and useless labour of endeavouring to *serve two masters*; yet when the evasion was ready, when the excuse was formed, probably the single eye was wanting—the influential conviction of the all-importance of eternal things was not in exercise; and that mind was not in you which was in Christ Jesus, who *endured the cross*, and *despised the shame*.† Ask of God to search your heart, that there be no reservations there—no *Zoars*—no weakness or sin of which you would say, “Is it not a little one?”‡ when you go to him for strength and grace.

Pray to be enabled to war against *yourself*, as well as against *the world*; and limit not the Holy One of Israel, with whom it is as easy to *conquer* for you all your most formidable foes, as to remove them out of your way.

Emily.—Indeed, I believe my faithlessness too often represented to me an *impossibility* of

* James i. 8.

† Heb. xii. 2.

‡ Gen. xix. 20.

setting my face boldly against these my besetting sins and trials.

Catharine.—It is written, “According to your faith, be it unto you;” * and, “all things are possible to him that believeth.” † With faithless fears—with unconscious reservations—with dishonouring views of the power of Him whom you were addressing, you dared not simply inquire the Lord’s way and will, but the language of your heart was rather this, “Make *my* way plain before my face,” and not “*thy* way,” which was David’s desire. You have been graciously left, my dear Emily, to feel all the thousand anxieties and intricacies attendant upon half-hearted and timid measures. Had you been content to follow the Captain of your salvation, and “the footsteps of the flock,” ‡ along the narrow way, and there daily to take up your cross, you would have found, that, though the gate is straight, the Lord would have guided your feet through it, into “the way of peace,” and “into all truth:” that though the way might be rough, an everlasting arm beneath would have been sufficient to support—“That when passing through the waters, he would have been with thee, and the rivers should not have overflowed thee—that when walk-

* Matt. ix. 29. † Mark ix. 23. ‡ Song Sol. i. 8.

ing through the fire, thou shouldst not have been burnt, neither should the flame have kindled upon thee."* We have many encouraging promises on the subject of answer to prayer, but let us also note what the Apostle says—and, " whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."†

Emily.—Conscience tells me that I ought not to have expected answers to my prayers, for I was continually doing things *unpleasing* in his sight, though a darkened understanding was not then aware of it. Other circumstances, too, tended to lead me astray. With a deep and abiding sense of the duties I owed to my beloved relations, I thought I perceived in some of my religious acquaintances a dereliction of these sacred obligations; and in endeavouring to steer clear of their *Scylla*, I was wrecked on my *Charybdis*.

Catharine.—Not entirely *wrecked*, my dear friend. You might perhaps say you were " tempest-tost, and half a wreck;" but that in the midst of your difficulties, you could adopt the language of the latter part of the stanza, should be a ceaseless source of thankfulness with you :

* Isaiah xliii. 2.

† 1 John iii. 22.

“ Though tempest-tost, and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek ;
Let neither wind, nor stormy main,
Force back my shattered bark again.”

Emily.—Indeed, I hope I *am* thankful, though my cowardly spirit would fain win the prize without fighting—would fain find a rest *here*, as well as hereafter. I have often hoped, however, that He who knoweth our frame will weigh in the balance of his mercy the peculiarities of my disposition and situation.

Catharine.—Remember, my dear friend, the balances of his *mercy*, are the balances of the *sanctuary*, wherein *all* the attributes of God are placed. He knoweth how sensitive are your natural feelings—how keenly susceptible your heart of love and affection—and what does he say ? “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart,”* and let all other affections be *subordinate*. He knoweth the timidity of your disposition, your fearfulness of offending. And if these dispositions had been turned into a proper channel, they would have been blessed auxiliaries, rather than hindrances in your way. You would not have “ feared their fear, nor been afraid,” Isaiah viii. 12.; but to have offended *God* would

* Deut. vi. 5.

have been your fear and your dread. "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil,"* while, the "fear of man bringeth a snare."† "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence;"‡ so that the fear which harassed and distressed you, must have been a misplaced fear. The pliancy of mind against which you have had to contend, and for which you would excuse yourself before God of many things, for which your heart condemns you, might rather have proved a source of thankfulness. For *the storm* must break the stubborn spirit, whereas the gentle gale might serve for the more pliant one. Well for you, my friend, that you have not been permitted to bend and break beneath the rushing torrent of an overwhelming world—swallowed up in that whirlpool, which is but the forerunner of the bottomless pit. Well for you, and well for me, that we have had to deal with One who breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax. May you henceforth, like Caleb, be enabled to "follow the Lord fully;"§ with "purpose of heart"|| to cleave unto him; and may this be your abiding and absorbing desire, to know his will, and to do it. Seek to form no excuses for yourself, but self-emptying, self-

* Prov. xvi. 6. † Prov. xxix. 25. ‡ Prov. xiv. 26.

§ Num. xiv. 24.

|| Acts xi. 23.

humbled, cry, *God be merciful to me, a sinner!* May those affections, which have been expended on earthly things, be turned into a better and higher channel—may strength be perfected in your weakness—and, stayed upon your God, may your anxious spirit know “perfect peace.” Isaiah xxvi. 3.

Emily.—Thank you, my beloved friend, for all your kind wishes and advice. You have indeed led me to see, that I have been acting as though I loved my kindred more than that gracious Being, who, I humbly trust, has called me from utter darkness to a dawning of light. I have shrunk from taking up my cross, and from following him, *through evil report and good report*, and therefore was not worthy of him. I have asked, and received not, because I asked amiss. My deceitful heart has often whispered *peace*, when a vigorous warfare should have been adopted; and, while scrutinizing the conduct of others, and feeling ready to thank God, I was not as they were, I was suffered to run into contrary extremes, that I might learn in future to esteem others better than myself, and to seek wisdom from above.

Catharine.—I find you are very ready to write bitter things against yourself, my dear Emily; and that is well—if self-judged, and self-condemned, we seek that fulness which is in Christ

alone—that justification which cometh from Him—I think I am aware of the characters to which you have referred, and as I would not mislead you, by leaving you to suppose I altogether approve them, I feel called upon to state, wherein it appears to me that they have erred. But while *speaking* of others, let us pray to be kept from *judging* them, for in so doing, we should but condemn ourselves; for we have *all* “erred and strayed from his ways like lost sheep,”* and should ever remember the beam that is in our own eye, instead of exposing the mote that is in our brother’s. But I perceive that the conduct of others has caused a weak sister to *offend*—I therefore feel called upon to explain my views respecting it.

The natural characters of our friends appear to me perfect contrasts to your own. Energetic, fearless, ambitious—the retired and unseen walks of life are wholly unsuited to them. With strong feelings, and strong affections, neither fearing nor anticipating evil, their feet seem to bound on the high places of the earth, where the sun-beam ever rests. Their buoyant spirits rest upon the bright perspective, and are so dazzled by it, they behold not the various obstructions and trials in the way.

Emily.—And surely this is but a definition of

* Confession.

that faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"* and which we should all seek to attain.

Catharine.—In its prominent features, it certainly is. But in *overlooking* the minutiae of their path, those daily and hourly trials, which in fact constitute the life of a Christian, they have often acted indiscreetly—have brought an evil report upon the ways of holiness, and have made their good to be evil spoken of. He, whose power extends over boundless space, condescends to exert it in the minuteness of creation. And He displays its perfection as much in the formation of the smallest insect, as in the Leviathan, who takes his pastime in the deep. Our life is made up of moments—and are moments to be neglected? Our life (particularly that of a female) is made up of trifles; but trifles are of importance in the hands of a Christian. Seldom are we called upon to make splendid sacrifices, or publicly to display Christian heroism, and zeal, and philanthropy; but we are daily and hourly called upon to exercise the gentle graces of self-denial, meekness, lowliness. Fearful, lest in word or action they should appear ashamed of their Lord and Master, the friends we speak of bring the subject

* Heb. xi. 1.

of religion forward, where wisdom would restrain it. They press onward, unmindful of the weak consciences they may wound, or the seared ones that they may tend more effectually to harden. "This one thing I do," they may justly say with St. Paul; but of his gentle forbearance, and pliancy in non-essentials, they know nothing. Thus, many a stumbling-block do they put in the way of weaker brethren, and the enemies of God they often make to blaspheme. Conscious of their own uprightness and sincerity, they are apt to consider all others, who differ from them, as necessarily wrong. *Circumspection*, they consider as a *compromising* spirit; gentleness, and self-denial in argument, as *the fear of man*; a quiet submission to existing circumstances, if those circumstances forbid an active service in the vineyard, as an indolent and slothful spirit—forgetting that though

..... "Thousands at his bidding speed
" And post o'er land and ocean, without rest,
" *They also serve, who only stand and wait!*"

I have known them, too, to condemn, as returning to the "flesh-pots of Egypt," those, who, to conciliate the affections of parents, have studiously cultivated those talents, which might afford them pleasure or amusement. But time, with

the blessing of God, will teach them, that if they would follow the footsteps of Him, who "pleased not himself," they must cherish the lowly graces of humility, self-denial, long-suffering, and gentleness. They will experimentally learn, that if they would be wise in winning souls, they must evince that wisdom which is from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."* The very expression, *winning* souls, should be marked. It seems to imply the placing before others the *attractions* of religion—the endearing appendages of Christianity, *the beauty of holiness*, the *fruit* of the Spirit; while the line of conduct which carries with it the appearance of a Jehu-spirit, 2 Kings x. 16, (though, in fact, it is far from it) shuts up the heart, and rouses the mind to enmity.

Emily.—I believe all that you have said to be quite correct, but still, while dwelling upon the conduct and experience of other Christians, I am greatly discouraged; for, however they may err in minor points, they seem to experience more "joy and peace in believing," than I do.

Catharine.—Remember, my dear Emily, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness.† You cannot

* James iii. 17.

† Prov. xiv. 10.

Judge of the experience of others. Nor is it wise to study so much the characters of those around you. Their disposition, their circumstances, their trials, their conflicts, may all be so dissimilar. An unerring standard is erected for you in the Captain of our Salvation. It is not written, Let that mind be in you which was in some of the martyrs, who have passed into eternity before you, or in any of the fallen sons of Adam, who are now surrounding you, but "which was in Christ Jesus."* The spirit becomes harassed and distressed, by comparing ourselves, or measuring ourselves with others. An ever-erring judgment would lead us astray in all our deductions and inferences. For some we should be blinded by partiality, and, contrary to our Lord's instructions, be ready to call them master.† And others we should depreciate, ignorant of all the detail of their life and conversation. Adulation, or condemnation, is too often the result. The safer path is, as a fallible and weak child, to look simply to the written Word of God, as the lamp for your feet, and the light for your path, and to the guidance of the Spirit which dictated its sacred pages. Humbled beneath a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of that sin which required the blood of the in-

* Phil. ii. 5.

† Matt. xxiii. 8, &c.

carneate God to erase ; with all lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than yourself—warring against sin, which doth so easily beset you, with your eye fixed stedfastly on Jesus, “ the bright and morning star,”* follow on ; and your feet will be guided into the way of peace.

Emily.—May I be enabled to follow your advice, my dear friend, and may such a blessed result ensue ! As I may not, however, see you again for some time, would you kindly enter into the more minute details of my circumstances, and give me your advice ?

Catharine.—I would, first, my dear Emily, endeavour to impress upon your mind, the blessed privilege of prayer, and the unspeakable advantages arising from it. Not the prayer of stated times alone, but that frame of mind implied by St. Paul’s expression, “ Pray without ceasing.”† An idea prevails, that it is savouring of *presumption* to seek counsel of God in all the minor concerns of life. But the Holy Spirit supplies us with *example*, as well as *precept*, upon this subject. When Abraham’s servant was to choose a wife for his master’s son, he seemed fearful to take one step without the peculiar guidance of his God. He not only prayed Him to send him

* Rev. xxii. 16.

† 1 Thess. v. 17.

“good speed that day,”* but requested, that the hand of his God might be peculiarly displayed in his selection from among the daughters of the land. Jacob, when fearing the effects of his brother Esau’s enmity, reminded the Lord of his past gracious promises, and implored his Almighty protection, entering minutely into his fears. How often does Moses spread before the Lord the existing wants of Israel. Hannah, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Daniel, and many others, may well teach and encourage the people of God. “Whiles I was speaking,” says Daniel, “the Lord heard and answered.” Dan. ix. 20. We are told to call upon him at all times, to “pour out our hearts before him.”† What can be implied from the latter expression, but the spreading our every want and feeling before him, who *pitieth* as a tender Father the children who fear Him?‡ There are no times, no circumstances, through which we can pass safely, if we quit the element of prayer. When all things go on prosperously and smoothly, the heart is too ready to say, “I shall never be moved,”§ and we most peculiarly need the tender and watchful Shepherd to keep us from straying. When ad-

* Gen. xxiv. 12.

† Psal. lxiii. 8.

‡ Psal. ciii. 13.

§ Psal. xxx. 6.

versity's dark hour overshadows our way, then we do, indeed, need all the consolations which are treasured up in our God and Saviour, and which He mercifully maketh to abound for the seeking and sorrowing spirit. When our way is intricate, we shall need wisdom from above to direct and guide us. Keeping this most essential point in view, I willingly offer a few remarks, which, with God's blessing, may be useful to you.

When a young Christian is placed among those who oppose her views, her *life* should speak more eloquently than her tongue. She should let her life be a transcript of whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, so that it may be said of her, as it was of Daniel, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."* The world is keen-sighted in the discovery of the slightest inconsistency, and as Christians are compared to cities set upon a hill, which cannot be hid, they should be peculiarly watchful and circumspect. — Cherish a tender and heart-affecting recollection of the disappointment experienced by worldly parents, when those children (for whose education so many thoughts had been expended, and whose talents and accomplish-

* Dan. vi. 5.

ments, parental pride had anticipated, would charm the world) are so changed by what, to them, appears fanaticism and folly, that their labours seem to be lost—their hopes blighted. Weigh well all these conflicting feelings in the bosoms of your beloved parents; and though the natural effect of disappointment may be the severe reproof—the cutting retrospection—they should never elicit asperity on your part, either in word or manner. Rather should the abiding conviction of their heart-corroding feelings impart a tenderness of expression of sorrow and regret, when conscience obliges you to swerve from the path they are tracing for you. This might tend to convince them, that nothing but a sense of duty would keep you from considering their wishes as commands. I do not think that children sufficiently consider the real grief of mind excited in their parents from that change, for which *they* are daily and hourly giving thanks. When opposed, a mutual spirit of opposition is raised within the vile and sinful heart. In all the pride of light, (a fearful term, but one too sadly expressive of the spirit raised in Christians, when contending with those in darkness) they are apt to impute every unkind and harsh intention to their opponent. Whereas, the more injustice we may meet with, the more unkindness, and the more opposi-

tion, yet the more humbled should we be, while the voice of conscience reminds us, "Such were some of you."* And "who maketh you to differ?"† "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified;"‡ deeds wholly independent of any thing in ourselves—wholly irrespective of any thing belonging to us. Consider, then, most tenderly, these wounded feelings of your beloved parents, and by a ceaseless attention to every circumstance, which may tend to evince your filial love and gratitude, and reverence, seek to win those hearts, by the *beauties* of holiness, which you have thus deeply wounded by obedience to its *requirements*. Be ever forward to oblige them—to enliven them by your cheerfulness, and amuse them by your acquirements. Then will your Egyptian spoil be turned to good account. You will be enabled conscientiously to say, I am doing all for the glory of God, if thereby their affections may be conciliated, and their judgments convinced. Nor let your looks and your manner be disregarded in these rules for circumspection and watchfulness. If, in former days, you allowed a repetition of the request, ere you complied with it, or, by look or manner, expressed, that some other employment would be more congenial to

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † 1 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

you, *now* show them, that you rejoice in complying with their wishes, and that opposing them is a source of anguish to you.

Emily.—Indeed, indeed it is! But tell me, my dear Catharine, would you, as a parent, *yourself*, consider all those accomplishments and acquirements as inimical to Christianity, and, consequently, to be avoided?

Catharine.—Very far from it. Rather am I an advocate for yet more mental cultivation than is bestowed upon females in these days. God has graciously bestowed powers upon us, which it would be sinful to neglect. The present system of female education I do not altogether approve. Our studies are light and superficial, which rather tend to cherish our natural infirmities. The vain, the trifling mind, finds no correction. But I do not mean to give you a disquisition upon female education; I would only wish you to understand, that, as a parent, I would have my daughter learn all that may tend to enrich the mind, without corrupting the heart: all that may ensure for her elegant and innocent resources—that as a child she may please and amuse her parents and their visitors—as a wife, she may be a *companion* for a man of sense and attainments, enlivening his hours of recreation by those accomplishments, which, when kept in subordination to more im-

portant things, are not only harmless, but useful. But, alas! too many females can find a fund of amusement for the drawing-room acquaintance—the flatterer of an hour—whereas, follow them into the domestic scene, and all is tameness and insipidity. No exertion is thought incumbent upon them, to please an aged relative, an indulgent parent, a kind husband. But it is the *aim* of worldly parents (of whom I was originally speaking) to educate their daughters, that they may shine in the world and attract its admiration, and, if these views are attained, they are satisfied. The *Christian* parent, on the contrary, trembles lest vanity and a love of display should spring up in her child, and she would lead her to look for the smile of the little circle at home, rather than the adulation of the multitude. The one fosters every desirable feeling—the other poisons the mind, and produces an incapacity in the heart for relishing the genuine but unflattering tribute of domestic satisfaction.

Emily.—I fear this is but too true. My own natural timidity and nervous temperament were uniform bars to *my* dazzling the multitude, or probably I should have added this to my train of evils. In another respect, upon which I wished to speak to you, I fear I have erred through ignorance, and want of experience. When I have

heard the followers of Christ reviled as hypocrites or enthusiasts, my natural feelings have been roused—and actuated at the same time by the idea that shrinking from the justification of those who were accused would savour of being ashamed of their Master, too often, I fear, I may have excited, in those who opposed themselves, stronger feelings of ill will, by the adoption of those very means by which I hoped to suppress them.

Catharine.—We are apt to speak *unadvisedly with our lips*, when we would justify ourselves or our friends *before men*, and I have not unfrequently remarked this on the part of children towards parents. Nothing but a sanctified experience can teach us to “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.”* All that is within us, rises against the voice of unjust detraction, when directed against those whom we know to be innocent, both in theory and practice, of the vilifying assertions that we continually hear circulated. It is under such circumstances that we must “consider Him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself;”† and patiently wait for the fulfilment of the promise, that their righteousness shall be made clear as the light, and their just dealing as the noon-day.‡ I have myself too

* Psalm xxxvii. 7.

† Heb. xii. 3.

‡ Psalm xxxvii. 6.

often found, that it was a greater trial to me to hear beloved Christian friends misrepresented and traduced, than to witness the many anti-christian proceedings of the world; and this proved to me, that I knew not what manner of spirit I was of, when so strongly excited in the cause of my friends. A quiet and calm statement of facts, it is well to make, and leave the event with Him who has said, "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."* At all events, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;"† and there are no circumstances, and no provocations, that can justify angry feelings. There is, indeed, a holy indignation, which our Lord himself displayed—an anger in which there is no sin (Eph. iv. 26.) But I think, generally speaking, the respect and deference due to *parents* would rather warrant refraining the lips, and keeping silence.

Emily.—I do not think that *hostile* feelings were ever roused in me, by these discussions, though I am conscious that I evinced an agitation which might often be thus construed. To oppose at all was contrary to my nature, and I possessed not that calm faith, that spirit which

* Prov. xvi. 7.

† James i. 20.

stays upon its God, and is therefore in perfect peace. Isai. xxvi. 3.

Catharine.—It is, indeed, a glorious triumph of faith, amidst outward storms and tempests, to enjoy this blessed calm; but “when He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”* “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I,”† must be the aspiration of the overwhelmed heart, when billows swell, and winds are high. Your silence, under the circumstances you mention, would have been more likely to produce conviction in those who were opposed to you, than all that could have been suggested in reply; because to enter upon the *views* and *motives* of the friends whose cause you desired to advocate, would only have been to urge arguments wholly incomprehensible to those whom you were anxious to convince. You, doubtless, found that you continually laboured in vain, and spent your strength for nought, while thus seeking to justify yourself and your friends. But, driven from your own weakness and unassisted efforts (for when we leave the path marked out for us by the Scriptures, our efforts *are* unassisted,) you will eventually be led to more patient waiting, more earnest prayer for direction in all things, and a more

* Job xxxiv. 29.

† Psalm lxi. 2.

diligent study of the Scriptures, which are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* We never seriously and heartily seek for a better wisdom than our own, till we are experimentally convinced of our own folly. We never earnestly seek strength from above, till we have suffered from our own weakness. We never believe, that all our sufficiency must come from God, till we are convinced that we are insufficient, of ourselves, to think a good thought, or frame a good desire. An infant suffers from many a fall, before he will give up his feeble attempts to walk alone; but his bruises are useful lessons: he becomes timid and dependent, and knows the value of the supporting arm which is stretched out for his succour. The Holy Scriptures become, with the blessing of God, not only the guide to our feet, but cheer the heart, and strengthen the weak hands. We see our Lord himself reviled and blasphemed, and his followers every where spoken against. And is the servant greater than his Lord in these days? We find, that "no temptation hath taken us, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will, with the temp-

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

tation, also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13. David says, "They spake against me without a cause. For my love, they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer."* "I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war."† And is not Christianity now, what it ever was? Though the outward spirit of toleration may exist, still all "that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;"‡ and, as, then, "he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."§ Still the world will love its own, and abhor them who testify of it, either practically, or theoretically, that its works are evil. But I would not dwell upon this subject; only that you may not think it strange, concerning the fiery trial which has tried you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but that you may rejoice, inasmuch as you are a partaker of Christ's sufferings. 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. When Christians meet, they are, however, too apt to expatiate upon their difficulties and trials, which only tends to foster spiritual pride, and to blight the fruit of the Spirit. For, seldom are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

* Psal. cix. 4.

† Psal. cxx. 7.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 12.

§ Gal. iv. 29.

meekness, and temperance, in exercise, when the conversation turns upon this subject. Well would it be for Christians, if they would oftener leave the clods and mists of the valley, and mount into more healthy regions. Our hearts would oftener burn within us, if such were our course.

Emily.—Too seldom have I done this, owing to my own faithless anxieties about existing circumstances. But I am sorry, my dear friend, to have kept *you* among these unhealthy mists so long.

Catharine.—Do not think, my beloved friend, that seeking counsel of each other in our difficulties, I consider among the useless species of intercourse. “Two are better than one; for, if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.”* We are commanded to “strengthen the weak hands”—to “confirm the feeble knees,” and to “say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not.”† We are instructed often to tell of the dealings of our God towards us, for “whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even *they* shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.”‡ This, this, is Christian friendship! This is the dim dawning of that brighter day above,

* Eccl. iv. 9, 10.

† Isa. xxxv. 3, 4.

‡ Psal. cvii. 43.

when those who have journeyed on together in life's rugged paths, shall meet to celebrate the praises of Him, who left the bosom of his Father, to live and to die for his rebel creatures—to dignify the walks of poverty, for He *had not where to lay His head*—to ennoble the ties of friendship, for *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus*; and to sanction yet more exclusive attachments, for one *leaned on his bosom*, and was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. Religion is said, by a world that understands not its nature, to *deaden* the natural feelings; but is it so? Ask those from whom religious differences may have separated us; how have they found us, should sickness, or sorrow, or change in their views, or any other circumstance, bring about a reunion? Oh, let them say, if they find less tender sympathy—less love—less warmth of heart—less practical kindness! Will love and devotion to him who is “*altogether lovely*”^{*} steel the heart, and blunt the feelings? Will not this powerful stimulus be rather likely to quicken each emotion that seeks the happiness of a beloved friend? Let the child say of the Christian parent, is there less of watchful care, and gentle kindness, and self-renunciation, than is found among the merely moral, or the worldly character? Let the parent say of

^{*} Cant. vi. 6.

the Christian child—is there less of respectful submission, and uniform attention to their wishes—and affectionate solicitude for their comfort? Let the husband say of the Christian wife, does he find less of that devoted attachment—that tender watchfulness to promote his every comfort—that meek submission—and the exercise of those gentle graces, which make the charm of home for him, when he leaves the business and bustle of the world? And will the wife find the Christian husband less regardful of her interests and happiness—less kind—less affectionate?—No: however deeply he may deplore, through the infirmities of our sinful nature—through the pernicious ways of mere professors, and the natural antipathy to holiness, that the ways of truth have been evil spoken of, *let not religion itself* bear the blame. *Let God be true, and every man a liar*; and He hath said, “Godliness is profitable unto *all* things.”* The *life*, as well as the *doctrines* of Him whom we would desire to claim as our example, inculcates the cherishing of every gentle and endearing quality; and though all earthly attachments are to be subordinate to the love of our highest and best Friend, that great ruling affection will ennoble, and strengthen, and sanctify all others.

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Emily.—I am well aware, that “*this is my infirmity,*” may be stamped upon all that is dark or crooked in the life of a Christian.

Catharine.—It certainly is so, my dear friend; but, while this conviction should humble us, we have much to encourage—much to cheer and fortify us, as we struggle onwards and upwards. Many are the precious promises upon this head. “Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness.”* “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”† “The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.”‡ We are not to despise the day of small things; nor to be discouraged because our grain of mustard seed does not immediately become the wide-spreading tree. All in this world is in a *progressive* state. All are gradually ripening for another world. ’Tis an awful thought; and one that should be often dwelt upon. ’Tis the voice of the Lord which utters, “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.”§ ’Tis the voice of the Saviour which compares the

* Psal. cxii. 4.

† Job xvii. 9.

† Prov. iv. 18.

§ Joel iii. 13.

righteous to the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, and says, "the harvest is the end of the world."* Multitudes, multitudes will then be gathered in that valley of decision. Joel iii. 13, 14. Let those who are in any way undecided or wavering, dwell upon these solemn words. Mercy bears with them here, even while they are too often practically, and theoretically, halting between two opinions—undecided whether most to love God, or a sinful fallen world—whether most to fear Omnipotence, or that puny being, "whose breath is in his nostrils"—whether to consider time, or eternity, of the greatest importance. But as indecision and change are the peculiar characteristics of weakness, so He who saith, "I am the Lord, I change not,"† tells us also of this valley of decision, where all his purposes, coeval with eternity past, and eternity to come, shall be awfully displayed. Had we sufficient energy, and strength of faith, to grasp these solemn and inevitable realities, would not our little fears and anxieties be absorbed? Should we fetter ourselves with these earth-wrought manacles, when we know that we might break them, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire, if we would apply to Him, who

* Matt. xiii 39,

† Mal. iii. 6.

“giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, increaseth strength?”* Let *us* be decided *now*, for soon shall we enter upon this “valley of decision,” where unchangeableness and eternity will be stamped upon every transaction.

Emily.—God grant that I may be so! Before we separate, I am anxious to know your opinion upon one more subject, in which some of my religious friends and myself have rather differed. It is respecting intercourse with the world. Of course, I do not mean the partaking in those pursuits which can only tend to dissipate the mind, and, if not in themselves actually sinful, are calculated to lead to many things which are so.

Catharine.—I believe there are very few whose path of duty would lead them from all intercourse with the world. Our Lord prays for his people—“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”† In your station of life, you must necessarily be thrown among those who differ from you in views and practice: but the single eye, and single heart, that seek all

* Isa. xli. 29.

† John xvii. 15.

opportunities for glorifying God, will not be disappointed.

Emily.—I have sometimes thought my friends not entirely justifiable in their views and practice respecting morning visitors, through whom their plans for the day may meet with interruption. So strongly has been felt the infringement upon their time, which, perhaps, might have been set apart for visiting their poorer neighbours, that the event has been considered beyond measure disagreeable, and what would almost sanction irritability, if not rudeness.

Catharine.—He “pleased not himself” was stamped upon the life of our great Example; and the life of a Christian should be one of self-denial, and patient forbearance. If not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the knowledge and will of our God, shall the slightest circumstance happen to his people, of which he is ignorant? It is the want of an *influential* remembrance of this, which leads us, in the minor concerns of life, to act as though a chance had happened unto us. Whereas to receive, and to act upon, all the minute details of life, under the impression, that God may be using us for his glory, and is ordering all things well, gives life, and interest, and pleasure, to those events which to the natural man would have been irksome. A morning visit

may thus be improved, and even should no direct opportunity occur of referring to spiritual things, the cheerful, the kind, and the courteous reception, and Christian sentiments upon every-day subjects, may do more towards winning a soul, than a long disquisition upon doctrinal subjects.

Emily.—St. Paul, too, speaks of becoming “all things to all men.”

Catharine.—He does, my dear friend. But too often that passage is quoted to shelter a compromising and kind spirit. Many become “all things to all men,” not, that by “all means they may save some,”* but that they may avoid the odium which rests upon the straightforward path. Some “searchings of heart,” would display innumerable reasons for this convenient pliancy; whereas only *one* is sanctioned by the Scriptures, and only one is prominent in our Lord’s life and conduct. Do we find ourselves in the society of a “lover of pleasure more than a lover of God,”† and shall we enter with him upon his pursuits, with the false idea of conciliating his affections, and of gaining *his* interest in *ours*? It cannot be. An old writer observes, “*Diseases* are often infectious, but *health* cannot be imparted in the same way. Pollution being more congenial to

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.

our nature, is more easily communicated than holiness." Tolerate the detail of his vanities with Christian patience, but let your want of interest in them be very evident, and if you are not able to excite *his* interest in *your* pursuits, your society will be quite as irksome to him, as his can be to you; and you will practically prove, that "two cannot walk together, except they be agreed." Am. iii. 3. If Christians were *consistent*, they would not so often have to complain of encroachments upon their time, though they might not have given their acquaintance the opportunity of supposing that the doctrines and practice of the Gospel are synonymous with *rudeness* and *unkindness*; and this is very desirable, for we are not to let our "good be evil spoken of," if by abstaining from "all appearance of evil," this may be avoided.

Emily.—I feel truly grateful to you, my dear friend, for condescending to dwell upon these apparently trivial circumstances, when your own mind has so long soared above them, and can revel unfettered upon the grand outline of Christianity.

Catherine.—If a limner despised the minute strokes of his picture, would it be called *finished*? And the connoisseur in the art would miss these finishing touches, more than the ignorant artist;

therefore, I hope never to consider these things unimportant, while a sojourner here below. Trifling, indeed, they are, when considered *independently* of eternal things. Oh, when the mind is indeed suffered to grasp the grand outline of Christianity, as you call it, it is lost in wonder! When this world, with all its varied pursuits and anxieties, is closing upon us, how will it appear to those who have made it their resting place, instead of their scene of warfare and usefulness? What will then be said of its paltry pleasures, its corrupting customs, the "goodly price" that the Saviour was prized at! Zec. xi. 13. When Jordan's waters shall appear, which shall discover the whited sepulchre, and sweep away "every refuge of lies," where will the trembling soul find rest or shelter? How many go trifling on, vainly thinking, "my Lord delayeth his coming,"* while death and judgment are advancing, to find ungirt loins, untrimmed lamps! Some snared in the fear of man: some choked with cares or pleasures; and but few, alas! asking earnestly "their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward."† In *that* day, it will be seen, whether it was wiser to obey God or man, to listen to the scoffs of gainsayers, to those who accuse us of being

* Luke xii. 45.

† Jer. l. 5.

“righteous overmuch,” or to hear him, who saith, “strive, wrestle, fight, run, give diligence, work, labour.” If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly, and the sinner appear?”* The world, the flesh, and the devil cry out against a holy and diligent life, but God has commanded it, and confutes their every clamour and objection. Therefore it is *He* who is accused, and not *we*—*He* who *commands*, and not those who *obey*. But if this were not the voice of *Scripture*, it would be that of the *renewed heart*. “What shall I render unto the Lord, for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?”† Mercy clothes, and feeds, and guards us. We are encompassed with mercies. The heavens shower them down upon us, and the earth breaks forth with them on every side. Our watchful Shepherd maketh us to lie down in green pastures, and feedeth us beside still waters; and though he maketh the fair and the flourishing to fade before our eyes, and the fingers of decay to touch our every possession, it is but to attract our heart and our affections to that “inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which he has reserved in heaven”‡ for his people. The child of God can therefore

* 1 Pet. iv. 18.

† Psalm cxvi. 12.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 4.

rejoice in all that *fades*, as much as in all that *flourishes*. All tell alike of a Father's tender love. All animate his heart—for when witnessing the wonders and beauties of creation—of a world upon which *the curse* rests—he can but anticipate with a hope full of immortality, the possession of a “new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* When this invigorating hope is in exercise, he finds himself quite ready to obey the injunction, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”† He reacheth forth, to this prize of his high calling, and prays that he may be enabled to walk worthily of it.

Emily.—You always cheer and comfort me, my dear friend, and give me such delightful views of our Christian calling, that I wonder I am not always rejoicing; and I leave you, feeling that I “can do *all* things through Christ strengthening me.”‡ I hope, when next we meet, I may be a companion more suited to you; and that, instead of discussing the grovelling opinions of a passing world, I may be enabled to enjoy, with you, higher themes—themes better becoming “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

† Eccl. ix. 10.

‡ Phil. iv. 13.

Catharine.—May it be so, my dear friend, for your own sake! In thankfulness for “the day of small things,” look onward with faith and confidence, and be ready to say of every anticipated difficulty, or distress, “Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.”*

* Zech. iv. 7.

THE END.

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